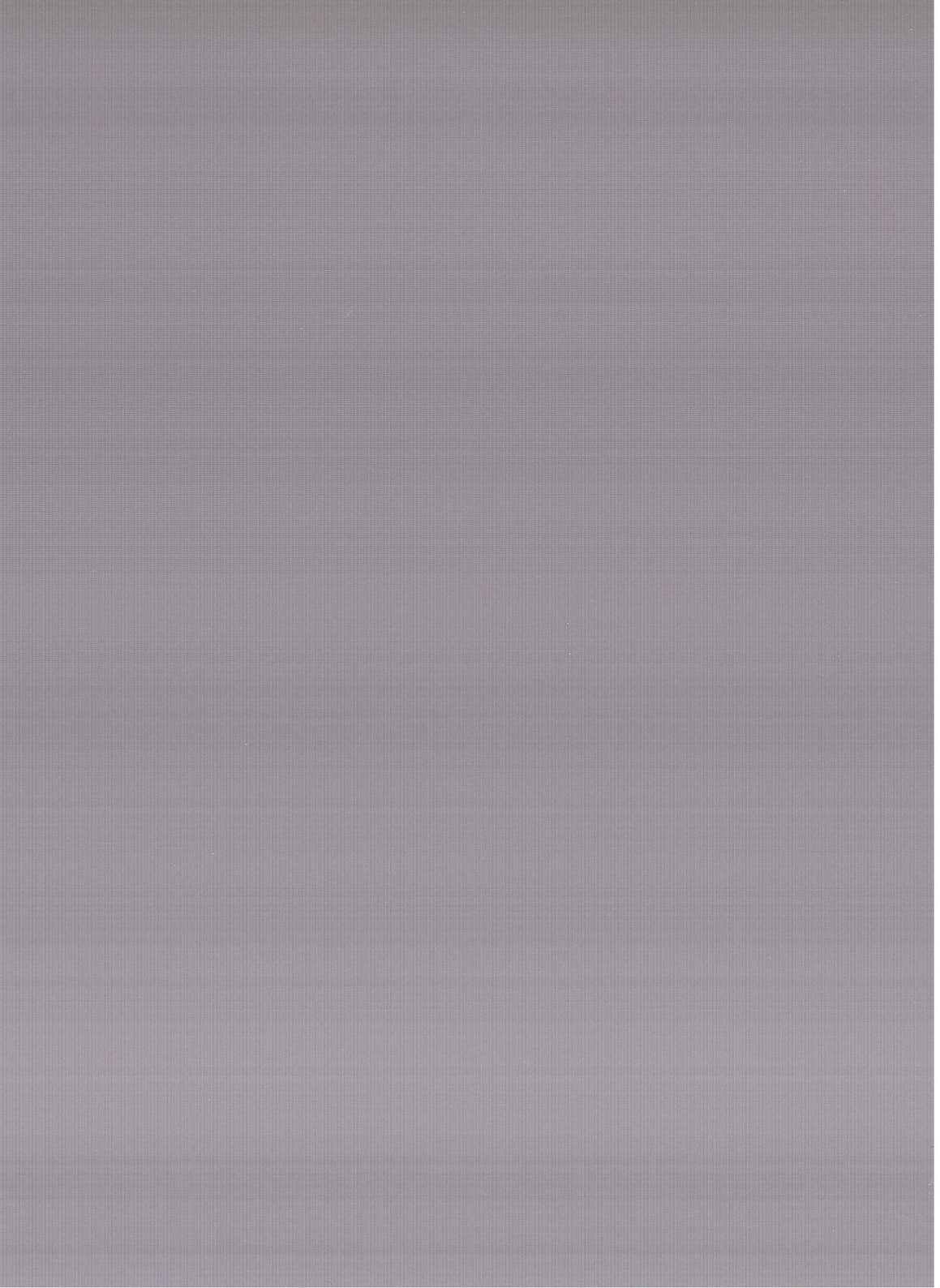


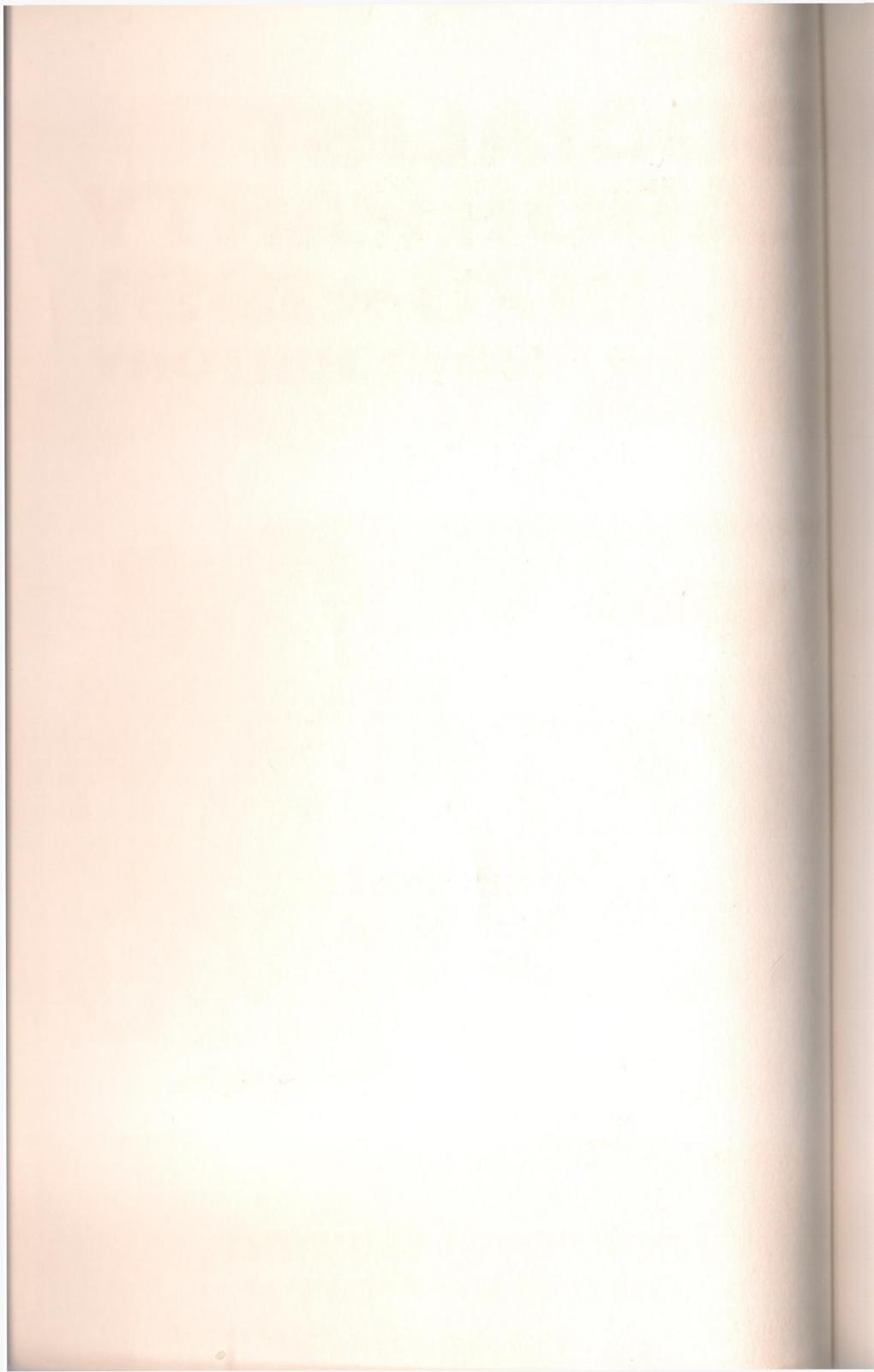
THE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY 1876—1991

A SHORT HISTORY



**by Frank Girard
and Ben Perry**





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**Frank Girard
Ben Perry**

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Front cover drawing by Bela Ormo (*Weekly People*, May 3, 1930)

Back cover drawing by Walter Crane (contemporary of William Morris and reflecting the same medievalist spirit, his drawings were used in SLP documents and publications; this is from an SLP postcard.)

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Credits: The picture of the Brandons appeared in *Socialist Forum*. The modern picture of Arnold Petersen was taken by Simon Merson. The Section Pontiac picture and the SLP postcard with the Walter Crane picture are from the collection of Frank Girard. The picture of Steinhilber and others was provided by Milton Herder. Except for that of Section Pontiac, all pictures and cartoons appeared in the *Daily People*, *Weekly People*, *Golden Jubilee of De Leonism*, *Daniel De Leon: The Man and His Work*, *The People* (Australia), *La SLP Folio* or SLP ephemera. The pre-1890 pamphlets are on microfilm at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. All other publications are from the collection of Ben Perry. Cover design and general production are by Frank Irwin who deserves more credit than can be given here. Text composition is by Ben Perry.

Foreword

A history of the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) is long overdue. Started in 1876, it is the ancestor of the far better known Socialist Party (SP), Communist Party (CP) and innumerable leftist organizations; it was a major factor in the launching of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Today it is the second oldest socialist party in the world and publishes the oldest socialist journal, *The People*. Despite this, it is comparatively little known and receives little attention from historians, especially the period after 1905. For them it may lack the glamour they associate with the IWW, the Socialist Party of Eugene Debs, and the Communist Party. Aside from a few recent biographies of Daniel De Leon, the major figure associated with the SLP, historical references to the party are usually written only as background for histories of other movements, and often the SLP and De Leon serve as villains in histories written from a partisan viewpoint.

The absence of the post-1905 SLP from books on labor history can be accounted for in part by its small size compared with the SP and CP. But another cause is certainly the political passions of the time. In 1912, Morris Hillquit, the foremost adversary of Daniel De Leon in the 1899 split in the SLP, published his *History of Socialism in the United States* which became a standard work influencing succeeding generations of labor historians. Moreover, these historians have tended to be members or sympathizers of organizations that were put off by the SLP's stance ("uncompromisingly revolutionary" or "hopelessly sectarian," according to one's viewpoint).

Yet the SLP with its alternative view of socialism had sufficient support to publish the first English language daily socialist newspaper as well as several foreign language periodicals, some of them lasting for generations. Its members distributed innumerable leaflets, sometimes several million in a year, and tens of thousands of workers attended SLP study classes and lectures on orthodox Marxism and socialist industrial unionism. After World War II, SLP candidates regularly outpolled those of the Socialist Party.

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The following work is a condensed account of the history of the Socialist Labor Party in the U.S. Both authors are one-time active members in the SLP, occasionally serving as speakers, instructors and candidates for public office. Frank Girard was a member from 1947 until 1981 when he was expelled. He was a member of the party's National Executive Committee in the late seventies. Ben Perry joined the SLP in 1951 and resigned in 1969. He was elected to the State Executive Committees in Michigan, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. We would like to believe that these experiences have been useful for this history and do not preclude our attempts to be reasonably objective. Both authors worked on all portions of the book, but Girard primarily wrote chapters one, four, five and seven; Perry wrote two, three and six.

We are not trained historians and have never attempted a research and writing project on this scale. This may explain why it has taken several years to complete what was originally intended to be a relatively simple monograph that would serve as an outline for a full scale history of the Socialist Labor Parties and other DeLeonist organizations in the English-speaking countries. We intend to pursue this larger project as well as other related ones; work on a bibliography is under way. We would very much like to hear from anyone who can correct errors and omissions in this history, provide us with documents, publications, pictures or oral accounts, or tell us where these can be found. We can be reached at: Ben Perry, 422 W. Upsal St., Philadelphia PA 19119, (215) 849-2765 or Frank Girard, 4568 Richmond NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504, (616) 453-0305.

We originally intended this history to be about seventy pages long. As it grew, we decided to add appendices and index. The value of the work would be much greater had we given citations in the text. However, we felt that retrofitting the work with footnotes would have delayed publication more than we wished. Interested readers are referred to Appendix A, "Sources and Selected Bibliography," and we will be happy to answer inquiries about specific references in the text.

We have received data and assistance from many persons, inside and outside of the Socialist Labor Party, but we would like specifically to thank Sam Brandon, Milton Herder, Frank Irwin, the late Louis Lazarus, Rado Mijanovich, Harold L. Miller (and The State Historical Society of Wisconsin generally), Mark Shipway and William Tait.

Finally, we wish to dedicate this book to all SLP members, past and present.

1: The Early Years 1876-1889

Like the Christian religion, socialism came to America with immigrants, mainly from Germany. Not surprisingly the division of socialists in the German homeland into two denominations--Internationalists, members of the International Workingmen's Association (IWA) who were strongly influenced by Karl Marx's ideas, and Lassalleans, followers of Ferdinand Lassalle, Marx's arch-rival in Germany--was reproduced in America. Later, when the struggle between Marxists and the anarchist supporters of Bakunin destroyed the IWA in 1872-4, its national sections were free to go their independent ways. For the Internationalists in Germany this independent way took the form of political unity with the Lassalleans in a congress at Gotha in 1875, where the first united "socialist party" in the world was organized, the Social Democratic Party of Germany.

Their comrades in America, who watched events in Germany as intensely as their counterparts would watch Russia a half century later, imitated them the next year, thereby becoming the second socialist party and, like the first, destined to last without organizational interruption to the present day. Events in America were especially conducive to unity in 1876. Expatriate German Lassalleans had prospered in the political democracy of the U.S., while internal warfare was destroying the International. As the International declined, some Marxists, while retaining their memberships in the International, had joined the Lassallean groups in their localities, giving these a Marxist orientation.

In April 1876, a preliminary conference of representatives of the Internationalists and the Lassalleans met in Pittsburgh and issued a call for a Unity Congress to meet in Philadelphia the following July to form a "Socialist Labor Party." Prior to this Congress, delegates from the remaining American sections of the International met in

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Philadelphia on July 15 and disbanded that organization. On July 19 the Unity Congress met. Seven delegates represented three thousand organized socialists in four groups: the now-disbanded International (with 635 members), the Workingmen's Party of Illinois (593), the Social Political Workingmen's Society of Cincinnati (250), and the Social Democratic Workingmen's Party of North America (1500), the latter three being Lassallean.

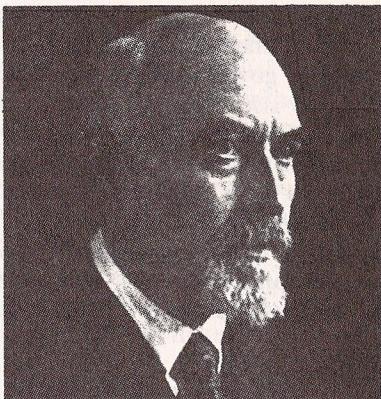
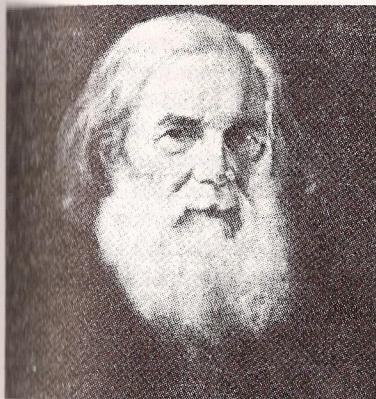
In four days the Unity Congress glued together the Workingmen's Party of the United States (WPUS) complete with an organizational structure, and a program calling for "the emancipation of the working classes," "the abolition of all class rule," and the abolition of the wages system. It also contained a Lassallean provision for state support of a system of cooperative production in which all means of labor would become the common property of the whole people, and an Internationalist-inspired call for the organization of trade unions. The Internationalists also succeeded in getting a party prohibition against electoral activity, although this was undercut by a Lassallean provision permitting sections to enter local elections if conditions seemed promising. Philip Van Patten, a Lassallean, was elected the first corresponding (national) secretary, a position he held until 1883. The new party had one English and two German weekly newspapers, *The Socialist* (soon renamed the *Labor Standard*) and the *Arbeiterstimme* in New York and the *Vorbote*, Chicago. The first was edited by J.P. McDonnell, an Internationalist and colleague of Friedrich Sorge, who was the head of the IWA in the U.S. and a frequent correspondent of Marx and Engels.

The Great Railroad Strike of 1877

It would have been hard to choose a better year than 1876 to launch a revolutionary socialist party in America. The Panic of 1873, which had first created a depression in agriculture, had by the mid-seventies begun to affect manufacturing and the transportation system. Unemployment on the railroads was high, and those workers still employed had to contend with arbitrary cuts in wages that were already abysmally low. The railroad strike began in July 1877, a year almost to the day after the founding convention of the WPUS. Starting at Martinsville, West Virginia, on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, it rapidly spread westward.

Coming as it did only six years after the Paris Commune, the strike's violence and mass working class support were blamed on "communists," which is to say the WPUS, in just the same way that Bolshevik

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Lucien Sanial (left), prominent spokesman and editor, "a man of facts and figures."
Henry Kuhn, national secretary 1891-1906, "iron soldier of the revolution..."

instigation was seen in any significant strike in the twenties and thirties. The Workingmen's Party was accused not only of encouraging and taking advantage of the violence but of planning the whole thing.

Actually the sudden outburst of working class militancy and solidarity surprised the WPUS and its leaders as much as anyone else. While the party supported the strike, organizing mass meetings often attended by thousands, these were largely propaganda meetings aimed at presenting the socialist solution to labor's woes, and not, as the communard-fearing business interests charged, to egg the strikers on to greater violence.

In Pittsburgh, the major center of violence, the WPUS had almost no presence at all. Its involvement was significant only in Chicago and St. Louis. The former was the site of the party's national headquarters and a high concentration of members who were deeply involved in the trade union movement. In their capacity as union militants, Chicago members like Albert Parsons, George Schilling, Philip Van Patten, and others addressing mass meetings were able to raise among the ruling class the specter of a general strike. The police made strenuous efforts to break up these meetings and were resisted, according to some accounts, by armed members of the Lehr und Wehr Verein (Education and Defense Society), a uniformed and armed unofficial socialist militia which had sprung up as early as 1874 in response to Chicago police repression of worker activity.

In St. Louis the specter became a reality. Sympathy strikes were actively encouraged by the influential WPUS and led to a general

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strike that cut off all services and halted the movement of goods. For five days the headquarters of the WPUS replaced City Hall as the center of government. From it it an "Executive Committee" set up by the party issued permits to move and distribute food and other necessities. This hiatus in capitalist control of the city came to be called the St. Louis Commune. In the aftermath of the strike, dozens of WPUS members were jailed, and several were indicted for treason--but never tried. Among them was Lawrence Gronlund later to become a prominent author and popularizer of socialist ideas. For the WPUS nationally, the principal result was a very rapid increase in membership; by 1878 it had shot up to seven thousand in seventy-two sections.

Economic versus Political Action I

In their eagerness for unity these delegates to the 1876 founding congress had not resolved the dispute on tactics between the trade union-oriented Internationalists and the Lassalleian proponents of electoral activity. The combination of a rapid increase in membership, publicity from the party's role in the 1877 railroad strike, and increasing misery among the working class as the depression continued made the question of political action a hot issue when the first national convention met in Newark in December 1877. Dominated by electoral enthusiasts, the convention dropped the prohibition against entering elections and also changed the name to the Socialistic Labor Party (SLP). It should be pointed out that this was a change in the name only. Organizationally the party remained as before, even retaining Van Patten as national secretary. There was no split between Lassalleans and Marxists as such, many of the latter remaining in the party.

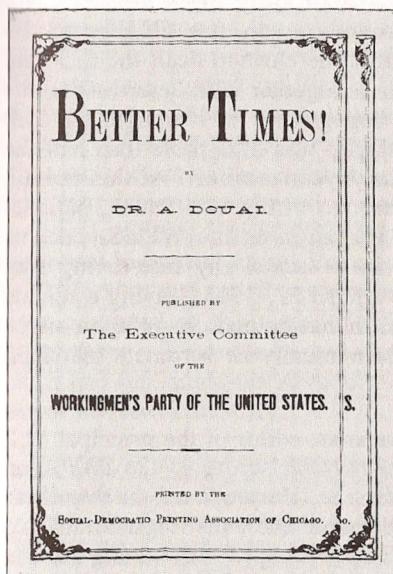
But Sorge and McDonnell, the leaders of the anti-electoral Marxists, seeing the handwriting on the wall, hadn't even bothered to attend. Taking with them most of the Marxist trade union militants--and the *Labor Standard* of which McDonnell was the editor--they immediately organized the International Labor Union (ILU) in conjunction with such eight-hour advocates as Ezra Steward and George O'Neill. The ILU had a short but gallant life, collapsing in 1881 and expiring in 1884.

Not all trade union militants left the party, however. Parsons and others, mainly in Chicago, joined the ILU while remaining active in the SLP. At the same time that they supported the eight-hour movement and the ILU, Chicago socialists pursued a very successful series of election campaigns, electing several aldermen and state legislators. In fact, SLP political success was sufficient to cause the

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Greenback Labor Party (GLP),² a cheap-currency reaction to the prolonged depression of the seventies, to look on the SLP as a possible junior partner. Van Patten and the rest of the national executive committee (NEC) favored electoral fusion with the Greenbackers, as did Parsons and many other members of the English language sections. The opponents of fusion were the trade-union activists in the foreign language sections in the Midwest and the anti-political revolutionaries in New York and some other eastern cities. The non-compromisers (anti-fusionists) prevailed in the 1879 convention in Allegheny City, Pennsylvania, where they nominated an SLP ticket for the 1880 presidential election. A party referendum, however, overwhelmingly rejected an independent SLP ticket and favored supporting the Greenback Labor or ticket.

It was this action by the majority together with a new SLP prohibition against membership in the Lehehr und Wehr Verein that hastened the departure from the SLP of Parsons and other Chicago militants, not rejection of electoral politics; for Parsons was a candidate for office as late as 1882 under the banner of trade union socialists. Nonetheless the rapid downturn in SLP fortunes in 1879 as the economy improved (the fall 1879 vote was only one-third that in the spring election, four thousand versus twelve thousand) and the counting out of the lone



Better Times! (1876) by Dr. Adolphph Douai, one of the party's first pamphlets. *Die Bienen* (The Bees, 1886), a "fable," translated from Russian to German, then the most useful language for SLP agitation.

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SLP victory created the mood for the 1880 schism.

Parsons, August Spies, and other trade union militants in the Midwestern foreign language sections united with the eastern non-compromisers in 1881 to form the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP). But theoretical differences between the eastern anarchists like Johann Most and the radical trade unionists forced another convention in 1882. It produced a new statement of principles, the Pittsburgh Manifesto, which accommodated the syndicalist thinking of the Chicago trade unionists, and a new name, the International Working People's Association (IWPA), called the Black International. By early 1885 the membership of the IWPA had reached six thousand, with two thousand of these in Chicago alone..

One can gain some idea of the extent of the SLP roots of the IWPA by the number of prominent members who had been members of the SLP. For instance, all but one of the Haymarket defendants had been SLP members. The exception, Louis Lingg, had emigrated from Germany in 1885 after the split.

The SLP Reaches a Low Point

The SLP fusion with the Greenback Labor Party was a disaster. Not only did the party have no influence on the GLP's small-business/farmer-oriented platform, but the election dealt the SLP and its new ally a resounding defeat. This together with desertions to the RSP and the economic recovery that began in 1879 brought the SLP in 1883 to a point where its membership was little more than half the three thousand it had begun with four years earlier. At this point a bizarre event crushed morale even more. Philip Van Patten, national secretary of the party since its foundation as the WPUS, became discouraged and, apparently because he lacked any face-saving way out of office, simply disappeared on April 22, 1883, leaving a suicide note. Some time later it was learned that he had changed his name and accepted federal employment. Eventually he became a merchant in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

Early in December 1883 Alexander Jonas, editor of the principal SLP paper, the daily *New Yorker Wolkszeitung*, wrote to the IWPA on behalf of some prominent SLP members. He proposed the reunification of the movement on the ground that the Pittsburgh Manifesto held almost nothing the SLP could not accept. Answering for the IWPA, Spies rejected the overture, suggesting that the SLP dissolve its national organization and join the IWPA as independent local groups.

The SLP Gets Its House in Order

The fourth SLP national convention in Baltimore in 1883 was attended by only sixteen delegates. The crisis in the party's fortunes brought strong and creative action. Apparently influenced by the IWPA's success, the convention adopted a less centralized structure. It abolished the office of national secretary, curtailed the powers of the national executive committee, and gave the sections a great deal of local autonomy. Tactically it renounced electoral politics except as an agitational and propaganda device. Ideologically it drew the line between anarchism and socialism, beginning a running debate with the IWPA. By abandoning the purely political electoralism of the seventies and conceding the necessity of force to achieve socialism, it co-opted a part of the ground held by the "socialist revolutionaries." At the same time by denouncing the language of violence used by many IWPA leaders, it began to appeal with some success to ex-SLPers in their ranks.

With this new energy plus the effects on recruitment of a new nationwide economic recession beginning in 1884, the SLP began its recovery. At its fifth national convention in Cincinnati in 1885, the number of sections was reported at forty-two up from thirty shortly after the 1883 convention. By 1886 the number had grown to sixty. The disintegration of the IWPPA in the aftermath of the Haymarket Affair may also have helped SLP fortunes at this time. The party's 1883 stricture against politics lasted through the 1884 presidential election, but in 1886 a union labor movement precipitated by the new economic downturn and spearheaded by the Knights of Labor and other supporters of the eight-hour day movement brought the SLP back into fusionist electoral politics, this time in parties called in various localities United Labor Party, Labor Party, Union Labor Party and Industrial Labor Party. These reached their zenith in the 1886 election and faded except in New York where fusionist sentiment persisted in the trade union faction around the *New Yorker Volkszeitung*. There the party had supported the United Labor Party, which had run single-tax advocate, Henry George, as its candidate for mayor of New York City.

In the first campaign in 1886, George came close to beating Theodore Roosevelt and a Democrat with the support of the SLP and union groups. In fact he probably did win but was counted out. Encouraged by this near success in the 1886 elections, George and his political advisers decided that still further political gains could be made among small business elements in the electorate by dissociating the movement from its union and socialist supporters. They also wanted

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to put the party on a more nearly pure single-tax basis by eliminating some of the platform concessions to the socialist and labor element. In the battle for control of the United Labor Party, the socialists lost and then organized the Progressive Labor Party. But an economic upturn and the effects of the split cut the vote of both parties to discouraging lows.

Economic versus Political Action II

To the *New Yorker Volkszeitung* faction of the SLP, whose interest in electoral politics had stemmed from the belief that it would rouse the interest of trade unionists in socialism, this disaster supported the contention that electoral activity in the U.S. was premature. But the political action group (which included national secretary W.L. Rosenberg, the majority on the NEC, and the party's German and English weeklies) prevailed in the debate over participation in the 1888 general election. For the first time the SLP went it alone in a national election and nominated presidential electors in New York who were committed to calling for the abolition of the U.S. presidency.

The low vote for this ticket, fewer than three thousand, followed by an even poorer showing in the spring 1889 elections completely discredited the political actionists headed by Rosenberg. At the same time the American Federation of Labor, by remounting an aggressive eight-hour day campaign, helped the fortunes of the trade unionist *New Yorker Volkszeitung* faction. Accusing Rosenberg and his group of dragging their heels in supporting the eight-hour struggle, the *Volkszeitung* faction succeeded in getting a majority in the General Meeting of Section New York. There, by stretching the constitutional right of Section New York to elect the national secretary and the national executive committee to include the right of dismissing them, they recalled Rosenberg, replaced him with Sergius Schevitsch, and elected three new NEC members.

The 1889 National Conventions

Questioning the authority by which they had been deposed, Rosenberg and the old NEC called a national convention for October 2, 1889, in Chicago. Because the new NEC chose to ignore the call, it was attended by delegates representing only a small minority of the SLP membership, the mainstay being Section Cincinnati. Through this convention the Rosenberg loyalists effectively separated themselves from the SLP majority. Known variously as the Rosenberg group and

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the SLP of the Cincinnati Persuasion, it later changed its name to the Social Democratic Federation and continued a separate existence until 1897 when it became a part of Eugene Debs's Social Democracy.

The *Volkszeitung*-influenced faction called its convention for October 12, also in Chicago. Clearly the larger of the two, it upheld the recall of party officials by Section New York, an action "of doubtful legality" according to Commons, author of the standard work on this period. It also made major changes in the tactics and goals of the party, one being the removal of a Lassalleian platform demand for government funds for co-ops. Lucien Sanial, later to become the first editor of *The People*, was instrumental in rewriting parts of the constitution. The party went on record as endorsing without qualification the major trade union objective of the time, the eight-hour day, and pledged to support the organization of trade unions. In the context of the Marxist-Lassalleian (trade union versus political action) conflict that had afflicted the party from the beginning, the convention was clearly in the hands of the "Marxists." Technically, then, the action of the convention supports the contention in later years that the party had been "reorganized on its present Marxist basis." But this took place in 1889, not 1890 as party historians later claimed, and was instigated, ironically, by the *Volkszeitung* faction, destined to become the opponents of revolutionary trade unionism in the SLP during the next decade.

Conclusions

Looking back at the pre-1890 SLP, party leaders spoke of the German beer drinking and singing society the SLP had been, a foreign transplant isolated from the American working class. In later years they were even unwilling to admit that the pre-1890 SLP with its history of fusion and confusion was the same organization. For them the Socialist Labor Party dated from the advent of Daniel De Leon in 1890 and the birth of *The People* in 1891. Socialist history before that was an embarrassment.

But of course one doesn't escape the past by repudiating it. Like all organisms the SLP retained the genes it had received at its conception. These included an ongoing internal dispute over the relative emphasis to be given to political and trade union activity. The SLP would struggle over this question in 1899, 1905, 1908, and 1924, long after the Lassalleian/Marxist debates were forgotten. Even in 1978, close to a century later, the question of intervention in the union movement would shake the party as would that of nominating a presidential candidate in 1980.

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Still another characteristic of the pre-1890 SLP was its domination by immigrants. What is questionable is the degree to which this condition interfered with its activity among urban industrial workers. The record suggests that in the cities, at least, the alleged foreign roots of socialism seem to have had a less inhibiting effect than Frederick Engels and later critics of the early SLP imagined, probably because immigrants had become an important component of the working class and because the party was rather more successful among English-speaking workers than was generally understood. Even Grand Rapids, Michigan, with a population in the 1870's of fewer than thirty thousand, had both a German and American section of the Workingmen's Party. Local newspaper accounts of a WPUS mass meeting held in support of the railroad strikers in 1877 describe it as sponsored by both sections, and the list of speakers includes German, English, and Irish names. The same held true a decade later at the meetings in connection with the eight-hour day agitation and the Haymarket Affair.

Moreover, except in the early eighties, the party always had a weekly newspaper in the English language beginning with the *The Socialist* and ending with the *Workmen's Advocate*. Also, while their fluency in English may have contributed to their prominence in the party, the roles played by Parsons, Van Patten, Holmes, Morgan, McDonnell, McGuire, Fielden, and many others make it clear that the SLP was not just a foreign colony in America. What does emerge as a bequest of the pre-1890 SLP is its special "mission" to the most exploited segment of the American working class, the immigrants.

Probably more alienating in the minds of most native-born American workers than its foreign accent was the SLP's alleged association--carefully fostered by the capitalist press--with the Paris Commune and the "crazy" element among the Bakuninists, who had adopted the tactic of public murder to fight the system. Assassinations, together with the public language of Johann Most and the RSP, continually raised the problem of how to dissociate the SLP from anarchist tactics while advancing the same goal.

2: Creation of the Modern Party 1890-1899

At the beginning of 1890, the Socialist Labor Party continued to feel the need for fluent English-language agitators to carry on work among American workers. The value of the support it received from immigrating German and Jewish workers was obvious, but of course no major successes could occur without strong backing from native English-speaking workers. The arrival of Daniel De Leon in the fall of that year was a major element in resolving the problem of Americanization.

De Leon Joins the SLP

Daniel De Leon was born into a well-to-do Jewish family in Curacao, a Dutch possession off the coast of Venezuela. After receiving an excellent formal education in Europe, he emigrated to the United States, and later became a member of the law faculty of what is now Columbia University. In 1886, he supported Henry George's bid for the New York mayoralty on the Single Tax ticket. De Leon soon became dissatisfied with Single Taxism. By early 1889, disillusioned with George and his economic theories, he joined the Nationalist movement of Edward Bellamy.

De Leon became a very active Nationalist. He was put in charge of organizing new clubs in the New York City area and was a frequent speaker and writer, sometimes to the point of physical exhaustion. However, he and a few other Nationalist members became dissatisfied with the movement's gradualist approach and attempted to pull the movement into an avowed socialist stand. An attempt to organize a new party along socialist lines failed, and in September or October 1890, De Leon joined the SLP.

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Another resolution, calling for the "collective ownership by the people of all means of production and distribution", passed by 2244-67. The AFL leadership ignored the socialist resolutions, and the struggle between the two factions continued in the 1894 convention where socialist delegates lost most of the votes but, gaining support from other delegates, succeeded in having Samuel Gompers replaced by John McBride of the miners who represented a nonsocialist anti-Gompers faction. In 1895, Gompers regained leadership of the AFL and was never again seriously challenged by socialists. According to Nathan Fine, not all the socialist delegates voted against Gompers.

Agitation in the Knights of Labor

From its earliest days, members of the WPUS/SLP, including Van Patten and Parsons, had worked within the Knights of Labor. Unlike the later AFL, the Knights wished to benefit both skilled and unskilled workers and accepted blacks and women as equal members. The original "Grand Master Workman" Uriah Stephens and his successor, Terence Powderly, did not welcome socialist influence. Powderly also thought little of the strike weapon and tried to squelch local Knights support for their widely publicized May First strike for the eight-hour day in 1886.

In 1893, the United Hebrew Trades joined the Knights enabling the socialists to become a substantial force in District Assembly (DA) 49. Despite being politically opposed to Populism, SLP delegates helped the Populists to take over the posts of district officers. That year, DA 49 sent a number of socialist delegates, including De Leon, to the General Assembly, the Knights of Labor national convention. Here, they worked with anti-Powderly delegates concerned with reversing the declining fortunes of the Knights and elected James R. Sovereign as Grand Master Workman. Sovereign, needing socialist support to stave off an attempt by Powderly to regain power, accepted De Leon's support in return for a promise to appoint Lucien Sanial editor of the Knights official organ. Sovereign did prevail against Powderly at the next convention but reneged on his promise, and the socialist unionists soon found that Sovereign's policies differed little from those of his predecessor.

In 1895, the SLP slate in DAA 49 was elected and took control of the district. On the national level, however, the Sovereign faction tightened its hold. At the fall General Assembly, the credentials of the DA 49 delegation were challenged and by a narrow margin it was turned away. Although by this time the decline of the Knights had

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left little to capture, the experience clearly was a source of deep chagrin to De Leon and most of the party. After this, SLP literature consistently condemned the "labor fakirs" (or fakers) for their crass opportunism and lack of real interest in long term political goals.

Party Growth and Changes

The 90s saw the party grow in size and influence. In 1891, there were a hundred sections, of which eighty-eight were German speaking. Immigrant Jewish workers made up much of the rest; Jewish sections were numerous enough in New York to hold their own annual conventions. The financial Panic of 1893 contributed to party growth. In 1896 the national convention had nearly a hundred delegates representing twenty-five states and Canada. The number of sections had doubled in three years.

The socialist vote continued to grow, and local candidates occasionally won office. The presidential vote in 1896 was 36,367, the highest it would reach before World War II. The party reached its all-time electoral peak in 1898 when the total vote for SLP candidates was 82,204. With this relative success came internal conflict. In Chicago and Cleveland there were, in spite of official party rules, fusions with Populists and Prohibitionists. In Haverhill, Massachusetts, the section's James F. Carey was elected to city council. When Carey voted for a militia armory appropriation, the national office demanded his resignation, but the section refused to force him to comply. But these difficulties did not interfere with the party's progress.

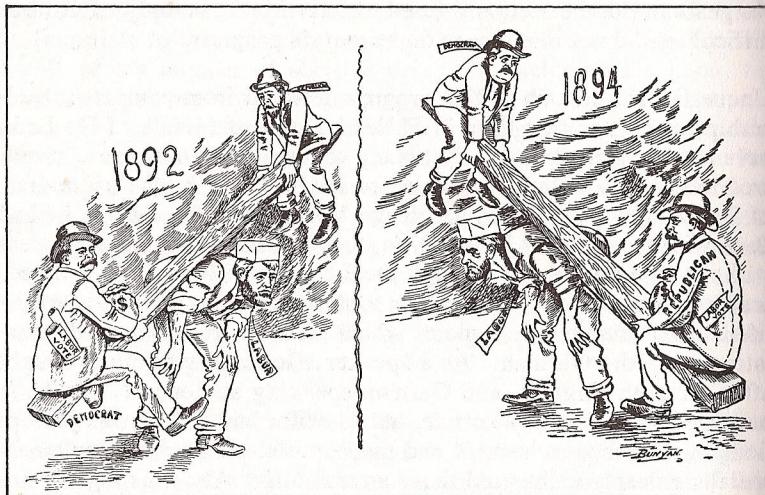
Unquestionably, much of this progress resulted from competent leadership, and since that time SLP "leader" and the name of De Leon have become synonymous. But many contemporary observers considered the SLP to have been dominated intellectually by the triumvirate of De Leon, Lucien Sanial and Hugo Vogt. De Leon, just as he had done with the Bellamy Nationalists, threw himself into the movement without reservation. Although De Leon's writings have a dated, academic flavor today, they were a vast improvement over most of the literature of the period, some of which suffered from awkward translation from the German. As a speaker, De Leon was much sought after for both English- and German-speaking audiences. De Leon never held administrative office, but as editor and speaker his perceptions of the labor movement and the required program to implement socialism deeply influenced those around him. Also, his legal training, knowledge of parliamentary procedure and debating skills undoubtedly were of great advantage in meetings establishing policy.

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He freely and harshly criticized his opponents. His enemies saw all this as manipulation and charged him with being a "boss" or "pope."

But the party had other important figures as well. Lucien Sanial, before immigrating, had been a French naval officer. He was a popular speaker and writer, frequently chosen to represent the SLP at international and labor conferences. Hugo Vogt was one of the German socialists forced to emigrate because of the Bismarck anti-socialist laws. His "forceful tongue and pen" made him especially useful working with German-American socialists. And the modern SLP might have turned out quite differently without the talents of Henry Kuhn who was the party's national secretary between 1891 and 1906. His tenacity and devotion to the movement became legendary. His loyalty to the SLP became also a loyalty to De Leon personally whom he described in later years as an "Instrument of Providence."

The "Americanization" of the party made considerable progress during this period. Documents from the 1893 convention in Chicago had been written primarily in German. But at the 1896 convention many of the delegates were from "American" sections or had clearly non-German names. (One of these was the noted feminist, Charlotte Perkins Gilman.) On the other hand, although the preponderance of Germans faded and the number of "native" Americans increased, the party did remain overwhelmingly first or second generation immigrant. Party literature was published in Polish, Danish, French, Ital-



An 1894 cartoon from *The People* by an unknown artist.

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ian and "Slavish" as well as the predominant English, German and Yiddish.

The printing and distribution of agitational literature also proliferated during the decade. Increasingly, books and pamphlets were written directly in English with fewer translations of European titles. Exceptions were the Marx/Engels classics, some of which De Leon translated. In 1896 Kuhn reported "'The People' has developed splendidly...with its circulation...now more than 6,000..." Under De Leon, *The People* had become the recognized voice of the party. The German *Vorwaerts* circulation had climbed to five thousand. Jewish members were by far the most successful, launching a daily *Abendblatt* with circulation of fifteen thousand. There were other English and German papers as well as ephemeral Dutch, Italian and Polish.

There were some, however, who objected to *The People* as a national organ. One group attempted and failed to replace the *People* with locally edited editions of the St. Louis-based *Labor*. The local editions of *Labor*, like *The People* during its first year, were filled with non-socialist "human interest" material. Their editorials sometimes endorsed political fusion and support for the AFL. This conflict was another harbinger of the coming split.

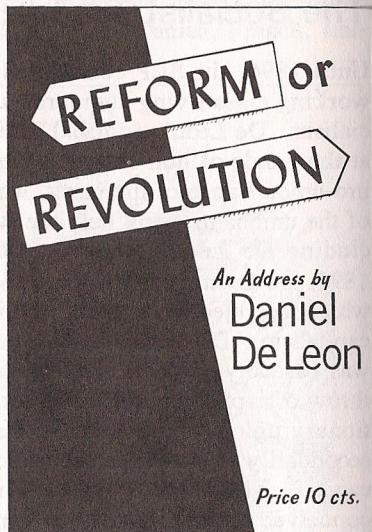
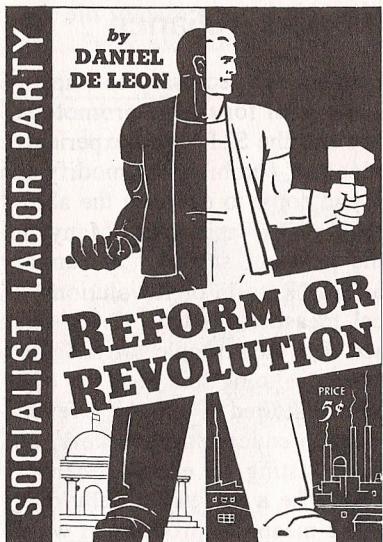
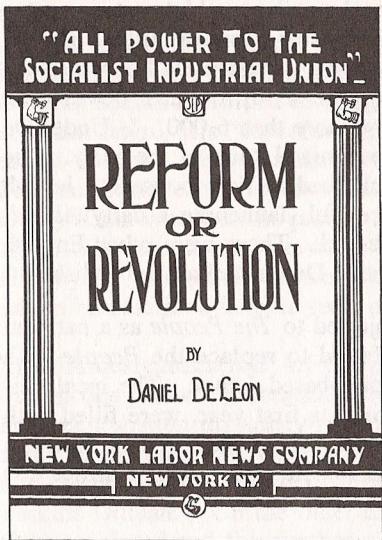
The Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance

Until 1896, the SLP considered trade unions necessary to improve working class living standards and as useful forums to promote socialism. De Leon's editorial influence and the SLP's bad experiences at the hands of non-socialist labor leaders combined to modify the pro-union stance of the party, which had come to question the ability of the unions to really help the workers under capitalism. Many, including De Leon, even doubted the value of strikes. In January 1896, De Leon gave a lecture in Boston, "Reform or Revolution," in which he rejected reforms: political measures that do not abolish capitalism. De Leon's speech argued that the struggle for socialism was basically political, and he called for nothing less than the overthrow of capitalism. The workers were exhorted to support a revolutionary union whose primary task was to educate the workers, and secondarily to play a defensive role in resisting the encroachments of capital. The ultimate goal continued to be a somewhat nebulously conceived commonwealth in which the means of production would be nationalized.

On December 13, 1895, shortly after the SLP-dominated District Assembly 49 of the Knights of Labor had in effect been rejected by its

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national body, it joined with a number of other Knights district assemblies and other labor federations in the New York city area to form the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance (STLA). Although the



Daniel De Leon (1866) whose ideas are practically synonymous with SLP theory and practice. Editions of his famous 1896 speech condemning reformism reflect graphic styles of different periods; cover on the left (1959) is by Walter Steinhilber.

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STLA is often referred to as having been "still-born," the SLP claimed that DA 49 took the majority of the fast-failing Knights with them, and evidently the STLA did begin with about a hundred locals in the New York area. According to Fine, a "hostile source" said that 228 charters were issued "between January [1896?] and July 1898" when it had about fifteen thousand members, and its influence had extended into Pennsylvania, New England and elsewhere. Samuel Gompers later wrote that the STLA had kept New York's East Side in turmoil and had received support from garment, textile, cigar making, mining and glass workers elsewhere. Although the SLP did not officially support the new union until its convention in the summer of 1896, in reality it was the guiding force, and SLP members were encouraged to join from the start.

It should be pointed out that the STLA was not an industrial union. Like the Knights of Labor, it was organized by trades or groups of trades. However, Gompers and his supporters were furious over this "dual unionism" which they saw as dividing the trade union movement, and some in the SLP like Thomas J. Morgan agreed. The SLP and STLA retorted that the AFL was hopelessly corrupt and based on the perverse principle of cooperation between Capital and Labor.

The STLA was an active and militant labor organization, but it suffered from a schizophrenia that was to affect the Industrial Workers of the World later: Officially, it did not believe that workers could gain any real benefits under capitalism and would do best by putting their energies into establishing socialism, but simultaneously the union *had* to fight for immediate gains with weapons at its disposal such as the strike. Many workers who joined the STLA lacked the long view of the SLP members and concluded that the more established AFL, even with its evident shortcomings, gave more promise of immediate benefits. The prevalent STLA and SLP attitude on the futility of traditional union activity is well illustrated by De Leon's February 1898 speech in New Bedford, Massachusetts, on the occasion of an important strike there. He informed the striking workers that what they needed, "aye, more than bread, is the knowledge of a few elemental principles of political economy and of sociology." The speech outlined the Marxist view of class division and exploitation, stating that the only solution was the "sword of the Socialist ballot" protected by "the shield of the trade union..." He conceded that shop organization could be of value but considered the strike basically an inspiring display of resistance to oppression.

In July 1898, the STLA held a national convention in Buffalo. De Leon had condemned Ernest Bohm, STLA national secretary,

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and August Waldinger, both officials in the Central Labor Federation, the "backbone" of the STLA. He charged the two with corruption: accepting advertising for Republican and Democratic candidates. The DeLeonites won a Pyrrhic victory when the CLF withdrew from the STLA. Prior to this, the STLA had had a considerable measure of independence with its press sometimes espousing views differing from those of *The People*. Afterwards, the STLA's influence declined rapidly, and most of its active members were SLP members.

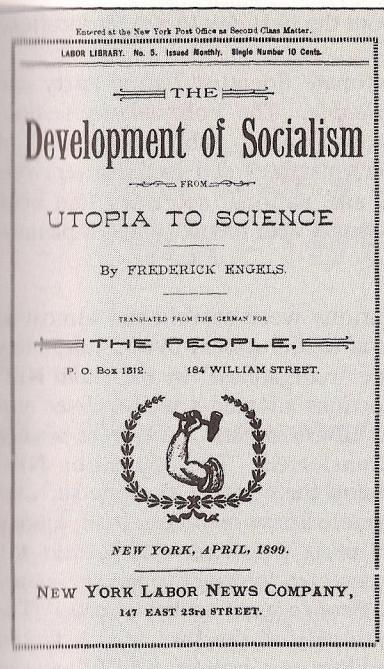
The Split

At the 1896 convention, few opposed the party's increasingly anti-reformist and dual union program. But difficulties arose with the Socialistic Cooperative Publishing Association, which published *The People* and the *New Yorker Volkszeitung*. Originally, loyalty to SLP principles had been required for membership, but during the decade many of the SCPA member, the "Volkszeitung group," had become estranged from current political developments within the SLP. Many were German immigrants of the generation before who had become small businessmen and were offended by the party's position that taxation was only a capitalist question, or who were skilled craftsmen deeply involved in AFL activity and bitterly opposed to the STLA. Factional opposition may have been catalyzed by Morris Hillquit, a one-time industrial worker who had become a lawyer. He advised a confidant that he would start an anti-De Leon campaign beginning October 1898.

The Volkszeitung group became a nucleus of opposition which extended beyond New York. This opposition went beyond the STLA and taxation issues to include charges that a few men, De Leon in particular, controlled the party. The question of revolution versus reforms does not seem to have been as important as one might suppose from reading later SIP polemics, although division over the question probably existed (as it did also around this time in the socialist movement in France, Great Britain, Russia and elsewhere).

Battle lines began forming early in 1899. The new NEC had only one oppositionist, and Henry Kuhn was reelected National Secretary by a large margin. When *The People* published what De Leon characterized as a "catalogue of sin" of the Volkszeitung, the Volkszeitung group tried to have its position printed in *The People*. When the NEC refused, the Volkszeitung group circularized the membership using *The People* subscription list. A referendum confirmed an NEC decision to dispossess the SCPA and have the press strictly party-owned.

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De Leon translated a number of works by Marx and Engels. Like many pamphlets, this 1899 edition was issued as a periodical to take advantage of very low postal rates.

On July 8, the semi-annual meeting to elect delegates to the Central Committee of Section New York was convened. Parliamentary wrangling and scuffling took place, and the opposition decided to call a General Committee meeting without the "administration faction." A last minute announcement was published in the *Volkszeitung*, inaccessible to most of the non-German DeLeonites. At the meeting, National Secretary Kuhn was replaced by Henry Slobodin, and most of the NEC was sacked. This rump meeting of the General Committee included only a fraction of the actual members and, in any case, probably lacked the authority to carry out its actions. (De Leon began referring to the opposition as "kangaroos" because of their alleged similarity to the "kangaroo courts of the old West, which ignored formal legality.)

The "Battle of July 10" occurred around midnight when the dissidents tried to take over the party headquarters. Considerably outnumbered according to DeLeonist accounts, the loyalists held off several attacks against opponents armed with iron and wooden clubs before police arrived with guns drawn. Accepting De Leon's explanation that his faction was legally there, the police dispersed the raiding party. However, since the headquarters were in the *Volkszeitung* building, the

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loyalists wisely moved everything out the next day to a safer location.

Each side declared itself the legitimate Socialist Labor Party and published its own version of *The People*. The Volkszeitung faction, having the original subscription list, was able to publish its account of events first. Outside of New York, members and readers were surprised to learn that the old NEC and national secretary had been deposed. The DeLeonites soon followed with the story that a planned disruption had failed.

In New York, duplicate organizations were established almost at once. Outside of New York, several sections went over immediately to the new SLP. Such sections were "reorganized" by the Kuhn NEC to exclude the dissidents. Other sections adopted a wait-and-see attitude, some of them concluding that affairs in New York were in such a mess that the NEC should be transferred. The opposition NEC gradually gained support from around the country as some sections went over to them and as they attracted new members from among those who had considered the old party's policies and leaders too rigid. The legal question of who possessed the right to use the names and emblem of the SLP and *The People* went to the courts. The remaining members eventually rationalized the loss of substantial portions of the German and Jewish blocs as a benefit, a fulfillment of the long-sought Americanization of the party. Most of those prominent in the breakaway SLP had been much less so in the old. The most notable to leave was probably Hillquit.

In February 1900, the dissident wing of the Socialist Labor Party held its national convention in Rochester, New York. It claimed to have the support of four thousand members out of an original 5500 while the "regular" party claimed that losses were minimal. (It is quite possible that a majority did eventually defect.) In its report to the new SLP, the Rochester NEC confidently predicted the early demise of the DeLeonite faction. It reported having lost a legal battle over the right to use the party name and emblem in New York but was the official SLP in Massachusetts and California. (Although most of the lawyers in the party except for De Leon were said to have been among the defectors, the New Yorkers eventually won virtually all of the legal battles.) The Rochester SLP declared its willingness to join with the Social Democratic Party because no "difference in principle, or even in tactics divides us." The Social Democratic Party, especially the leadership, had mixed feelings about their new supporters. However, on July 29, 1901, anti-De Leon socialists held a unity conference, and the Socialist Party (SP) was organized with a claimed membership of ten thousand.

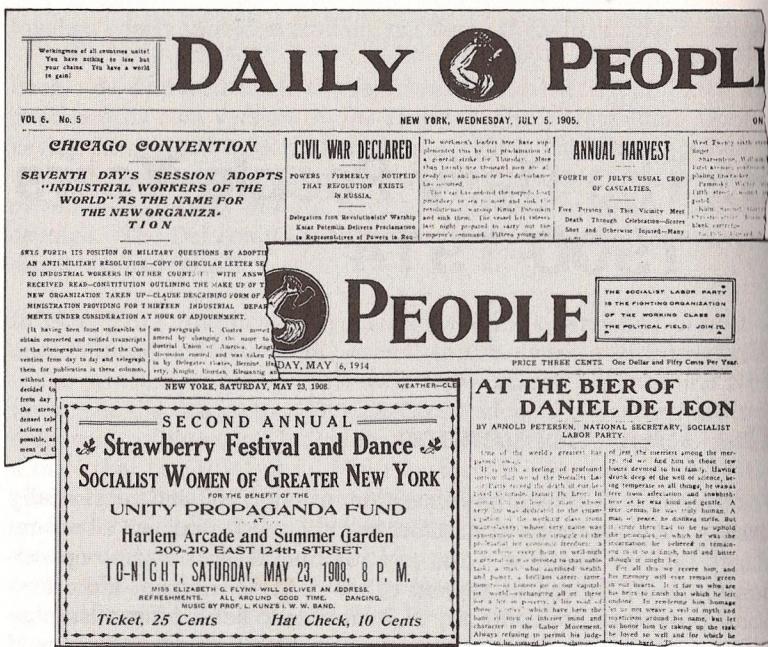
3: The Daily People Years 1900-1914

The 1900 Convention

The "regular" SLP held its convention in June 1900 and substantially changed its organizational structure and policy. It removed all reform planks from its platform. And as a reaction to the kangaroo opposition to the STLA and its support of the AFL, it endorsed a constitutional provision forbidding any SLP member to be an officer in a non-socialist union. De Leon and the majority felt that such office would be a corrupting influence. Henry Kuhn, the national secretary, opposed the provision, feeling that workers would regard such a position with hostility and that the "labor fakers" would be left in charge. Another change took away the right of Section New York to choose the NEC which was now to be chosen by referendum from fourteen candidates nominated by the "seat of the headquarters." In addition, the Board of Supervisors, a Cleveland-based committee designed to arbitrate internal party differences which had frequently overturned decisions by the New York NEC, was abolished.

Another decision of the 1900 convention had the most far-reaching consequences. It authorized the publication of a *Daily People* although the party had failed by a wide margin to raise the fifty thousand dollar fund originally thought the minimum needed to start publication. Again, Kuhn opposed De Leon and the majority. The first issue appeared July 1, 1900. The *Daily People* exemplified an important new position taken by the party: The party press must be owned and controlled by the party itself. While the hoped-for circulation never materialized, the daily and weekly *Peoples* edited by De Leon were a unifying voice championing the SLP's program.

In the 1900 elections, the DeLeonite SLP received 33,382 votes, only a small decline from its 1896 total. It was, however, much less than



July 1905 *Daily People* on the founding IWW convention also has item on Russian revolution. May 1914 *Weekly People* announcing De Leon's death. May 1908 DP ad for Unity Propaganda Fund function with future "Rebel Girl" E.G. Flynn, speaker.

that received by the coalition slate of Eugene V. Debs and the kangaroo, Job Harriman.

The "Kanglet" Disruption

The struggle to maintain the daily by a party consisting of a few thousand workers--increasingly demoralized by the ascending fortunes of the SP--was intensely stressful, and personality conflicts were not long in coming. The paper's first manager, Julian Pierce (who also ran the New York Labor News Co., the party's book distributor), had from the beginning recommended that the *Daily People* be suspended for economic reasons. After the 1900 elections the SLP was forced to reduce the size of the paper, and it laid off a number of employees. Those who remained went through hard times when purchases of paper or installment payments on the machinery had priority over wages. At the end of 1901, De Leon reported that he had not received his normal \$25 a week for a year and a half; twice, his wage was only five dollars. Kuhn later wrote that not "a few of the mili-

The *Daily People* Years 1900-1914/27

giants broke down from the fray. The S.L.P. of those days used up a good deal of human material."

1902 saw the culmination of internal controversy. There were bitter charges and counter-charges of "Daily People killers" and dictatorial "Managing Powers." In the end, major figures like Vogt and Sanial were gone as well as Pierce and many others who had worked hard for the party. The "kanglets" were fever than the kangaroos of a few years back, but they represented a great reservoir of talent that could not be readily replaced.

The 1904 SLP convention concerned itself largely with the problems facing the party press. It endorsed De Leon's policies and sent a delegation to the International Congress in Amsterdam. Also, the convention changed the party constitution to give the NEC national representation. An NEC Sub-Committee (S-C) whose members lived in one city was designated to carry out administration between NEC meetings. (In time the New York S-C came to function like the old New York NEC). The SLP vote that year was 33,510, virtually the same as 1900 and down less than ten percent from the banner year of 1896. This was little consolation, however, for the Socialist Party's Eugene Debs received over 400,000 vtes.

Industrial Unionism

De Leon gave his "Burning Question of Trades Unionism" speech in Newark, NJ, April 1904. It is a roiling indictment of traditional craft unionism with its attendant corruption. Industrial unionism is nowhere mentioned as such, workers being advised to join the STLA, which was organized by trades or crafts. In one section, De Leon describes the "historic mission of unionism," which is to support the political victory of socialism. De Leon's industrial unionism as conceived more fully a year later proposed that workers elected to a socialist parliament would represent industries and not geographical regions. This view was not original and had been anticipated by French and American syndicalism some years before. However, the syndicalists had almost invariably come to reject political action as a means of taking power, preferring instead a revolutionary "general strike." "Industrial unionism" was in the air at that time though perhaps more as a class weapon than as a vehicle for revolutionary change.

A major development in labor history began when radical unionists called a secret conference to be held in Chicago, January 1905, to

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discuss ways of organizing the workers along industrial lines. No SLP members had been invited although national organizer Frank Bohn was present, apparently because he happened to be working in the area. The conference issued a manifesto announcing a convention in Chicago the following summer whose purpose would be to launch a national industrial union.

The convention, enthusiastically awaited by De Leon and the rest of the SLP, opened on June 27, 1905. De Leon was one of the most active and vocal delegates at this founding meeting of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Like Debs, he saw in the IWW a concrete manifestation of socialist ideals. The two publicly announced a healing of the bitterness between them. However, Debs's future support of the IWW involved little practical activity, for he was unable to overcome the hostility of most of his party due mainly, he claimed, to opposition to De Leon. But SLP members, as De Leon put it, entered the IWW "like ducks to a mill-pond."

Despite the small number of professed anarchists or syndicalists, the convention supported delegate Father Thomas Hagerty's plan of organization in which the union, and later the nation itself, was to be organized along industrial lines. After heated debate, the convention adopted a constitutional preamble which included a sentence (the well-known "political clause") that declared that the class struggle would continue "until all the toilers come together on the political, as well as on the industrial field...through an economic organization of the working class without affiliation with any political party."

Shortly after the Chicago convention, De Leon went on tour to promote support for the IWW inside and outside of the SLP. In Minneapolis, he delivered a speech, "The Preamble of the IWW" (published now as *Socialist Reconstruction of Society*). Arguing for the political clause, De Leon claimed that, in this country where universal suffrage exists, the movement for socialism must have a political wing, although he refrained from stating that that wing must be the SLP itself. The new economic movement, which he called "industrialism," however, was to do more than fight for workers' benefits. It was to back up the socialist ballot and be the basis of socialist society with the political state replaced by non-geographic industrial divisions. When this revolution had occurred, the SLP would disband, handing power over to the industrial union. This picture of future society was a syndicalist one. However, in combining the concept of industrial government with a political movement that would legitimize it, he launched the ideology that would become known as "DeLeonism."

The Socialist Trade and Labor Allianc had now dissolved into the IWW contributing 1200 members (largely SLP supporters) to the IWW's original 4200. The party itsel worked with great enthusiasm in support of the IWW. While therhad been wrangling over the Preamble's political clause, the SLP ad other revolutionary elements in the IWW initially worked well togerter. A year later, they cooper-ged to depose its president, Charles herman, a compromise choice who apparently considered socialism more than a dream of the future and who was perceived as tryingo turn the IWW into an AFL-type "business union" operation. Thi, however, effectively marked the end of cooperation between the DLeonists and non-SLP radical unionists. The political clause continued to draw fire. There were few left from the SP to support the SP' position but an ever-growing anarcho-syndicalist wing which scornd politics, demanding "direct action." Some, like Bill Haywood ad Vincent St. John, who had initially worked with and praised De Lon, were now opponents.

New Internal Opposition

Only two years after the "kanglet" disension, De Leon encountered personal opposition from James Connolly, a many-talented Irish socialist agitator who had helped foud the British SLP. In 1904 Connolly attacked as anti-Marxist the lance of many in the party who held that strikes were useless since wge increases would be negated by price increases. He also criticized he party's severe and unrelenting denunciation of the Catholic churc, claiming that it unnecessarily alienated many workers. This pu him in direct opposition to De Leon who posed as a lapsed Catolic and was architect of the party's strong anticlerical stance.

Another opposition voice was that of rank Bohn, a dynamic national organizer, who in 1906 succeeded Hery Kuhn as the party's national secretary. Bohn began to doubt that the SLP could continue to function as a bona fide political party; he elt that it would function better as a revolutionary propaganda league,possibly within the SP.

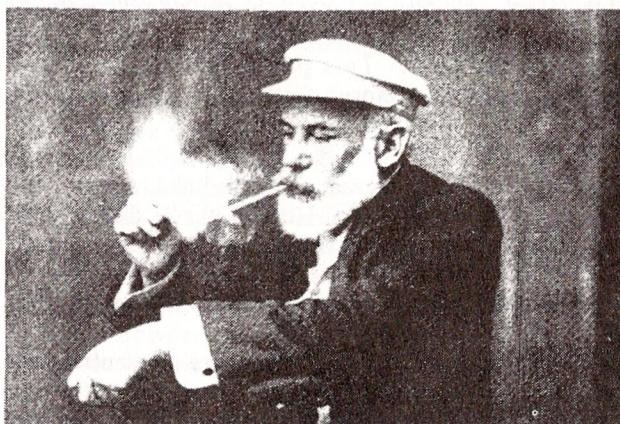
When the NEC met in June 1907, thre were substantial contingents of Connolly and Bohn supporters within the party, and the NEC itself was divided. Of those present at themeting, three were for Bohn, three for De Leon and a seventh uncctain. Olive M. Johnson, who represented California, suddenly deided to attend, creating a pro-De Leon majority. She later claime that this action probably saved the party from the "Bohn-Connolly sis." This episode marked the last serious challenge to De Leon withn the party.

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In January 1908, Bohn resigned as national secretary and was replaced by Paul Augustine. Bohn left the party not long after, going to the SP for awhile and then reportedly supporting Woodrow Wilson for the U.S. presidency. James Connolly also left the SLP, joining the SP and founding the *Harp*, a paper directed toward immigrant Irish workers. He eventually returned to Ireland where he became far better known. With James Larkin, he directed a six-month strike of twenty thousand Dublin transport and other workers. (During World War I, he decided that the nationalist question had to be settled first and joined Sinn Fein. He was commander-in-chief of the Easter Rebellion and was executed by the British on May 12, 1916.)

The Unity Question

Shortly after the founding of the IWW, De Leon had expected that the Socialist Party might break up over conflict between pro-IWW and pro-AFL factions. Although generally portrayed by the SLP as wholly reformist, the SP had a revolutionary wing which accepted much of the SLP program. This fact, coupled with the reluctant realization by SLP members that the SP was not only not breaking up but had surpassed the SLP in popularity among the workers, fueled a recurring movement within both parties for unity. The two parties on local and state levels occasionally explored this possibility. In the



D. De Leon

Daniel De Leon (1852-1914). More from his experience and venerable appearance than his actual age, he was familiarly known as the Old Man.

The *Daily People* Years 1900-1914/31

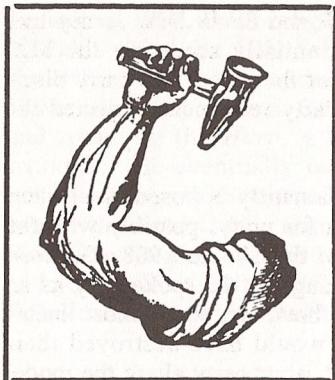
Winter of 1905-6 delegates from the SLP and SP in New Jersey met several times, and agreed to unify, essentially accepting the SLP positions on the IWW, party ownership of the press, and party discipline. However, a statewide Socialist Party referendum rejected the proposed agreement.

Although Kuhn and others remained adamantly opposed, sentiment continued for pursuing a principled plan for unity, possibly with the SLP as a semi-autonomous subdivision of the SP. In 1908, De Leon spoke on behalf of such unity, emphasizing that he spoke only as an individual member. The SP leadership, however, was almost unanimously opposed. Unity with the SP would have destroyed their dreams of the SP becoming an influential labor party along the model of the European social democratic parties. Despite a declaration by the Amsterdam International Congress in 1904 that rival national parties should merge and the precedent of such mergers in Russia and France, the SP not only rejected a merger but attempted to prevent recognition of SLP delegates to the Second International.

The IWW Split

The growing "direct action" wing of the IWW, hostile to political action, tried and failed to defeat De Leon and remove the Preamble's political clause at the 1907 IWW convention. Personality issues were also a factor; De Leon was often cantankerous and difficult to work with. However, his deep hope that the IWW would succeed sometimes enabled him to transcend personality conflicts. On August 1907, De Leon wrote to Haywood congratulating him on his release from prison where he had been serving time on a trumped-up murder charge. De Leon added that because Haywood was "unencumbered by the animosities inseparable from the early days of the struggle," he had become the natural working class leader. "The capitalist class has thrown the ball into your hands. You can kick it over the goal." As for the SLP, "when the I.W.W. will have reflected its own political party...it will be with a shout of joy that the S.L.P. will break its ranks." De Leon never received a reply.

A year later, the anarcho-syndicalists were better organized. Recognizing that they had a fight on their hands in the IWW, the SLP saw to it that its members and friends paid their back dues, and De Leon, Rudolph Katz and other SLP members were elected as delegates. By now there were virtually no delegates from the Socialist Party. In the West, an "Overalls Brigade" of unskilled and unemployed workers was recruited, apparently to pack the convention. They were the



The arm and hammer party emblem dates back to 1885 when it appeared on the *Workmen's Advocate*. The rumor of a connection with the baking soda company was false, but magnate Armand Hammer confirmed he was named after the party logo. Two other examples are on the title page, the right one designed by Milton Herder.

prototypes of the militant, "horny handed," anti-intellectual wobbly that the IWW has since come to symbolize. After five weeks of riding in box cars, holding meetings, selling literature and singing union songs, they reached Chicago. Many of these newly-minted members knew little about the issues except for the alleged need to get rid of De Leon. The SLP, on their side, derided the "bummery" and condemned what they saw as a dangerous trend toward glorifying physical force. The SLP felt it necessary to provide bodyguards for De Leon.

After considerable debate, De Leon was denied his seat on the basis of credentials never previously questioned. Clearly a pretext, it saved the anarcho-syndicalists from having to face a master of debate and parliamentary procedure. The SLP wing promptly left the convention and organized a rival IWW which became known as the "Detroit IWW". The original far better known "Chicago IWW," whose constitutional preamble no longer mentioned politics, became increasingly well known for militant strikes, free speech fights, and often violent repression by company and government police.

The Detroit IWW, however, was not initially a negligible force. In 1912 the silk workers of Paterson, New Jersey protested against low wages and the introduction of the four-loom (per worker) system. While the Chicago IWW was devoting full attention to a large strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts, the Paterson strikers accepted leadership by the Detroit IWW and its skilled organizer, Rudolph Katz. Fifty speakers were sent in and, according to one account, a thousand *Daily Peoples* were distributed daily. According to Katz, thousands of workers temporarily joined the Detroit IWW, and some settlements were made with smaller companies. The larger mills refused to bargain, and Katz and a colleague were jailed. At this point, the Chicago

The *Daily People* Years 1900-1914/33

IWW and Bill Haywood either were invited in, or imposed themselves, depending upon who can be believed. In the end, they too were defeated.

The Detroit IWW gradually became less of a union and more of a propaganda organization, mostly composed of SLP members, to espouse industrial unionism. It is conventional to refer to it as "De Leon's IWW," but in reality De Leon and many other members were unenthusiastic about it. He supported its strikes editorially but did little else on its behalf. De Leon was greatly distressed by the 1908 IWW division and seems to have felt that only an effective industrial union was worth strongly supporting.

De Leon and DeLeonism

In March 1908, before the split in the IWW, the SLP nominated Morrie Preston for the presidency. Preston, probably not even a party member at the time, was an IWW organizer who, while picketing a Nevada restaurant, had shot and killed the owner in self-defense. Jailed on a murder charge and widely viewed as a working class hero, Preston's candidacy would have embarrassed Debs who was again running on the Socialist Party ticket. However, Preston (who was to be exonerated eighty years later) declined the nomination, and the SLP vote decreased by 60% from that of 1904.

At the party's April 1912 national convention, the national secretary reported that there were about three thousand members, not all in good standing. In addition, there were four foreign language federations with about 1700 members. In November, the party received 29,213 votes, nearly reaching the 1896-1904 levels. But the SP nominated Debs for a fourth time, and he received almost 900,000 votes. The electoral disparity between the two parties claiming to represent American socialism was much greater than ever before.

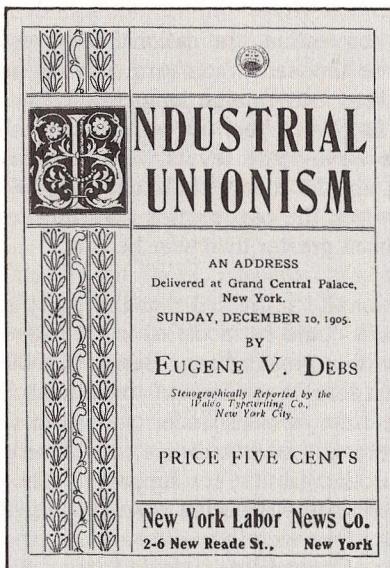
During this period De Leon occasionally indicated that the party's rigid opposition to immediate demands could be modified in the interest of establishing a socialist party with a greater base. Between 1909 and 1913, De Leon published at least four "open letters" to leaders of various reform groups supporting certain reforms under capitalism if these brought genuine relief and were not merely tactics to undercut the revolutionary movement. As to other tactics, his support of electoral politics and opposition to violence only reflected current American conditions. In countries where free elections did not exist or where widespread military training of conscripted workers was the

rule, he conceded that tactics might differ. It would be a mistake, though, to misconstrue the stand of the SLP and De Leon at that time. Although it was for a peaceful solution to the social question, it opposed any evolutionary concept of social change.

De Leon's hold over the party was an intellectual one. He never held any non-editorial office within the party although he freely made policy recommendations to party officers. At times he was stubborn and unyielding, willing, for example, to break off relations with his son and fellow-member Solon rather than compromise what he felt were party principles. Yet the NEC and its Sub-Committee occasionally made decisions that he was unhappy with. Nonetheless, the later official SLP position that De Leon was incapable of arbitrary action cannot be supported either, since many important editorial positions in the party press clearly preceded official sanction.

End of the De Leon Era

Of all the problems facing the organization, financial difficulties became the most pressing. In April 1913, national secretary Augustine wrote to all the sections: "Suspension threatens the Party Plant... Creditors are pressing for payment and some have threatened suit... We must raise One Thousand dollars immediately..." Tele-



The SLP published this 1905 speech by Gene Debs when he strongly supported the IWW. Later editions featured essays by De Leon and gave Debs second billing.

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grams were sent out asking the larger sections to raise \$150, each, within two days.

In early 1914, "Augustine, incapable of facing the situation...", according to Kuhn, resigned and Arnold Petersen was prevailed upon (by De Leon, himself, according to Petersen) to take the job of national secretary. Petersen had been a member for only six years, but he had become increasingly prominent as a writer and had demonstrated his administrative ability as the party's New York state secretary. He had studied accounting and, after discussing matters with the party's auditing committee and finding only \$79 in the party treasury, recommended that the party cease its commercial printing operation and "suspend" the *Daily People* (but continue the *Weekly People*). The last issue appeared on February 22, 1914 and we can well believe the contemporary who reported that "it hurt De Leon as few other things had." Meanwhile, De Leon's health broke down. During the winter he had had repeated severe "colds" and at one point requested the NEC to deduct two weeks salary for his inability to work. He finally was hospitalized.

A special meeting of the NEC was called for May, just two months before the regular semi-annual session. Special committees proposed to pull the party out of its financial hole with loans from members and a special literature fund. Other proposals were to consider lowering subscription rates, selling the plant, and having the weekly paper printed outside. The predicted lawsuits had become a reality. Although the desperate financial situation was the central issue, the NEC found time to denounce the killing of Chicago IWW members in Colorado.

Daniel De Leon died on May 11, 1914. The party and its sympathizers universally mourned his passing. There were some uncharitable statements by his enemies, the *New Yorker Volkszeitung* stating that "he died a few decades too late..." However, there were also many tributes from old opponents, and there was clear evidence that De Leon's writings and oratory must have touched many who were only peripherally connected with the movement. The *Newark Evening News* wrote that three thousand attended his funeral service and that fifty thousand lined the streets watching the procession. An era of American socialism had passed.

4: The SLP without De Leon 1914-1924

De Leon's death did not leave the party to be run by green hands. Edmund Seidel, De Leon's assistant, became national editor and had capable help in the editorial office. Arnold Petersen had been national secretary for only three months, but had served on the NEC Sub-Committee for some years, was familiar with party affairs, had written for the party, and was especially qualified to face the financial problems assailing the party. Besides Seidel and Petersen, the party had a number of articulate and effective spokespersons, among them Arthur Reimer, Olive M. Johnson, W.W. Cox, Boris Reinstein, Sam French, and Caleb Harrison. Even more important it had a membership of 3200 (impressive by left standards today, but dwarfed then by the forty thousand in the SP). Many of these had had a decade and a half of disciplined experience in the unrewarding activity of revolutionary agitation among a non-revolutionary working class.

Also, unlike the faction-ridden SP, the SLP was unified behind a well defined program, revolutionary industrial unionism, which in the minds of the members provided not only the path to a socialist society but the form that society would take as well. The pages of the *Weekly People* (WP) of the era demonstrate the membership involvement in a very real way. Column after column--sometimes two of the eight full newspaper-size pages--consisted of letters from members and sympathizers relating their experiences and successes in spreading the word.

As the underdogs in the socialist movement, they saw it as their duty to expose the sham socialism of the reformers. A favorite ploy was to attend a lecture by Debs, Victor Berger, or Algie Simon and at the end of the lecture to raise the embarrassing questions that would demonstrate what they regarded as the SP's betrayal of revolutionary principles.

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But their feisty aggressiveness could not make up for the fact that they had been effectively isolated--or had isolated themselves--from what most people regarded as the main current of socialism in the U.S.: the SP and the (Chicago) IWW. For one element of the membership, easterners with a broader outlook like Solon De Leon, Louis Fraina, Arthur Reimer, Rudolph Katz, Boris Reinstein and Seidel, this was a tragedy that they felt must be remedied. But the rank and file--the letter writers described above--were confident that the superior principles of the SLP would in time bring the revolutionaries of the SP into the SLP.

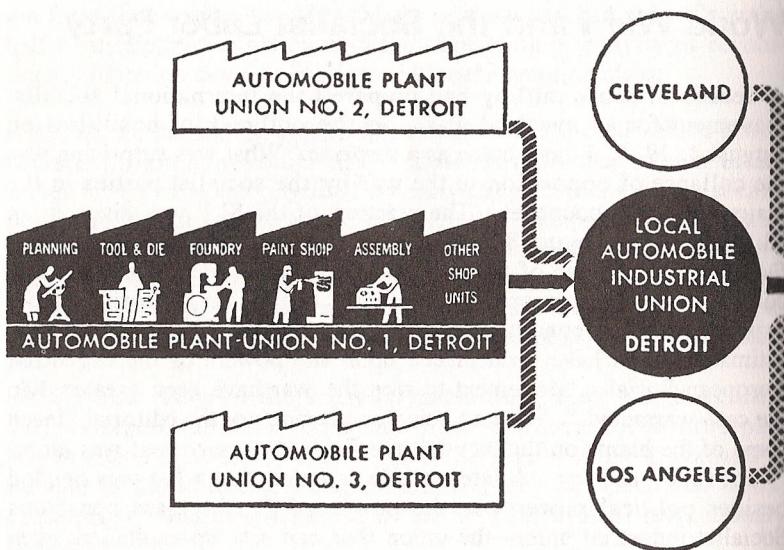
Also burdening the party were continuing financial problems. In August 1914, Petersen wrote to Julius Hammer enclosing repayment of a small loan made to the party. Petersen asked if he could help a Comrade Rossmeis to whom the party had owed \$100 for eight or ten years and who was facing dispossession "besides being on the verge of starvation." A year later, Petersen sympathetically answered a plea from Philip Veal to be rehired as an organizer in Illinois stating that the party lacked the funds and adding that he hoped "that something will turn up which will enable you to get through the winter without having to resort to anything desperate." Veal, a one-legged ex-miner who had been blacklisted by local employers, finally broke a window in order to be fed and lodged in a local jail.

World War I and the Socialist Labor Party

A decade of saber rattling had prepared the international socialist movement for an eventual war. So the outbreak of hostilities on August 4, 1914, did not come as a surprise. What was surprising was the collapse of opposition to the war by the socialist parties in the major European countries. The reaction of the SLP was given in an editorial in the August 8 issue: "War and the Socialist Movement." Deplored the failure of the movement to mount an uprising of class conscious working people or a general strike, the editorial, while expressing hope, concluded that "...the fact must be faced that the estimates which have been placed upon the powers of the organized European Socialist Movement to stop the war have been greater than the case warranted." Without being condemnatory the editorial placed some of the blame on the fact that the European movement was largely not revolutionary. A later article asserted that what was needed besides political power was the power of "...the class conscious Socialist industrial union--the union that can sew up capitalism even tighter than the present war."

During the war the SLP experienced some repression, mainly harassment at the point at which such groups were most vulnerable: the second class mailing privilege by which they distributed their periodicals. The 1918 NEC Report stated that issues of the Bulgarian and Scandinavian weeklies had been withheld from the mails and that the Lettish (Latvian) paper *Proletareets* had to suspend publication because of financial problems caused by the Trading with the Enemy Act. The German paper, *Sozialistische Arbeiters Zeitung*, lost its second class mailing privilege and also suspended publication. Later the WP itself experienced similar problems when its second class mailing privilege was revoked for three years. Cases of individual repression, however, were much less frequent than in the IWW, for instance. Probably the most celebrated case was that of William Dodge of Buffalo, a party member and member of the Workers International Industrial Union. (In 1915 the Detroit IWW changed its name to the Workers International Industrial Union (WIIU); hereafter "IWW" will refer to the Chicago IWW.) In 1917 Dodge was indicted and convicted of violation of the Espionage Law for street corner speeches he gave. In another case, SLP member Joseph Brandon, who sought conscientious objector status, was sentenced to death for refusing to carry a rifle. The sentence, however, was not carried out.

Where possible the SLP engaged in demonstrations against the war,

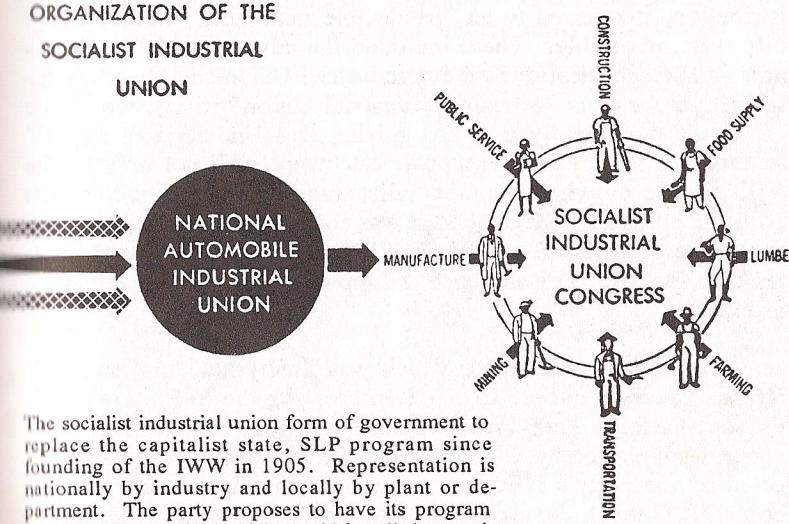


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sometimes on its own and sometimes in collaboration with other groups, especially the left wing of the SP. A *Weekly People* article describes an SLP-sponsored demonstration in San Jose, California, attended by over a thousand, and a similar one in San Francisco. These were addressed by I. Shenkan of the WIIU and May and Rudolph Schwab, the latter an SLP organizer on the West Coast and son of Michael Schwab of Haymarket fame. An outstanding example of its cooperation with other socialist groups is the demonstration the party sponsored in New York City, where the speakers included besides SLP members like Reimer and Katz, Leon Trotsky and other left luminaries.

But true to its view of itself as an educational organization, the SLP's primary agitation during these war years continued to be the printed word, especially leaflets designed for mass distribution and printed by the hundreds of thousands on the party presses at 45 Rose Street. These included such titles as "Preparedness and National Defense," "Foreign Invasion," and "S.L.P. Manifesto on the War Crisis," all advertised in the April 21, 1917, *Weekly People*. Interestingly, the SLP anti-war leaflets weren't all issued by the NEC; a rather emotional peace leaflet, "The Life Desecrators," translated from the Swedish, was published by the Women's Socialist Labor Party Club. It didn't contain a single reference to socialism or the class struggle.

ORGANIZATION OF THE SOCIALIST INDUSTRIAL UNION



The 1917 Socialist Unity Conference

The principal tactical problem facing the party during these war years was its isolation from the reformist mainstream of American radicalism. To the leadership of the SLP a newly aroused interest in unity by rank and file members of the Socialist Party must have been most welcome. The death of De Leon seems to have prompted a movement by SP members to unify the movement in the U.S. But even earlier, in March 1914, before De Leon's death, Eugene Debs had called for unity in the *International Socialist Review*, the major theoretical journal of the SP. Asserting that "There is no longer any valid reason why there should be more than one party," he called also for a merger of the Detroit and Chicago IWWs and hoped to see the initiative for unity taken by the rank and file.

Official word from the SP came in a letter from its executive secretary, Walter Landfersiek. A front-page story in the March 25, 1916, *Weekly People*, "Socialist Party Votes for Unity Conference," reported the letter as saying that a large majority of the SP had voted in favor of sending a committee of five to meet with a similar committee from the SLP to discuss unity. The SP suggested Chicago in mid-June.

The SLP national convention held in May 1916 responded to the SP overture by adopting a statement entitled "Basis and Form of Unity Proposed to the Socialist Party." Produced as a large leaflet for mass distribution, it referred to an "irreducible minimum" without which unity was impossible. These included the advocacy of "...what is known as pro-political or Socialist Industrial Unionism..." (Note the use here of the term "Socialist Industrial Union" (SIU), which the SLP would consistently use, recognizing that "industrial unionism" had become an increasingly popular catchword used not only by the IWW but also by wholly non-socialist trade unions.) The Socialist Party, the proposal went on to say, was committed to SIUism anyway because the SP delegation at the 1907 International Congress at Stuttgart had voted for a resolution that supported this view of economic organization.

Events delayed the conference which was finally held in New York City on January 6 and 7, 1917. Representing the SLP were Caleb Harrison, Rudolph Katz, Arnold Petersen, Arthur Reimer, and Boris Reinstein, all elected by a referendum. SP representatives, who were elected by the party's NEC, were Samuel Beardsley, Louis Boudin, George H. Goebel, James Oneal, and Charles Maurer. The stenographic report, which was never published because the SP refused to

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pay the share it agreed on, runs to 424 pages. The two sticking points that prevented unity can be summed up in a few words: the SLP's insistence on the federative plan of unity, which would have given it a sort of autonomy within the united socialist party, and acceptance of socialist industrial unionism, which implied rejection of the AFL. When the conference ran aground on these, Boudin proposed a compromise called the Council Plan, under which the unified party would accept industrial unionism in principle, and a new plan of unity under which the virtual autonomy of the SLP under the federative plan would be limited. In caucus the SLP delegation accepted the compromise on the condition that the united party accept the idea of SIUism. The SP refused, and the conference ended abruptly.

The report of the delegates to the SLP membership was printed as a party document, a copy being sent to each member. It described the events at the conference and laid the burden of failure on the SP leadership's rejection of industrial unionism. No report was made to SP members; their delegates asserted that they had no such responsibility since nothing concrete had been accomplished that could be reported. Thus ended the last organized effort to unite the SLP and the SP.

Dissension and Internal Difficulties

Reporting to the 1918 NEC session a year and a half after the Unity Conference, national secretary Arnold Petersen could see two dissident factions in the SLP: one that wanted unity with the SP at any



Two national organizers: Caleb Harrison, advocate of unity with the Socialist Party and first national secretary of the Workers Party; August Gilhaus, Presidential candidate in 1908 and Vice-Presidential candidate, 1912 and 1920.

WITHDRAW FROM RUSSIA

RESOLUTION.

WHEREAS, it has come to our notice that United States troops engaged for service in the war against Germany have been sent to forcibly invade Russia and are now engaged in warfare with the armies of that country; and

WHEREAS, such action has been taken without the consent of Congress, the only war-making power of our nation, against a country and people with whom we are at peace, for the apparent purpose of foisting upon the Russian people a form of government other than the one they have chosen for themselves; and

WHEREAS, such action being clearly unconstitutional and clearly against the interests and the desire of the broad masses of the people of America, we therefore, make known the interests and the desire of a few imperialist clerics. THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that we urge upon Congress to demand of the Government the immediate withdrawal of our troops from Russian territory; and be it further,

RESOLVED, that we urge upon our Government to spare no effort to bring about the withdrawal of the troops of such other countries as it is associated with in the aforesaid invasion of Russian territory.

National Executive Committee, Socialist Labor Party, 45 Rose St., N. Y.

We, the undersigned, approve of the above resolution, and add our demand to that of the Socialist Labor Party for an immediate withdrawal of American troops from Russia.

Name	Street	City and State
.....

Petition demanding withdrawal of troops occupying portions of Russia after the October Revolution. Support of Russia did not extend to U.S. "burlesque bolsheviks."

cost and another--including many members of the WIIU--who believed industrial union activity should take precedence over party work. The first upheaval involved the unity matter. Edmund Seidel, De Leon's assistant and successor as national editor, was a wholehearted advocate of unity whose sentiments tended to leak into the columns of the *Weekly People*. He was supported by other unity-minded members like Katz, Julius Hammer (father of Armand Hammer, the recently deceased oil tycoon, who was also an SLP member briefly), Solon De Leon, and Reinstein, all of whom had apparently come to the conclusion expressed by Louis Fraina in a 1913 report: that the SLP was no longer a viable party and that it could spread SIU ideas more effectively as a faction inside the SP. Increasing the appeal of this idea was the rapid growth off the SP left wing as a result of the events in Russia and, as a consequence, the prospect that non-sectarian DeLeonism might receive a sympathetic hearing from these newly hatched leftwing SPites.

This view received its principal expression in the pages of the *Weekly People*, where Seidel was in a position to give it some support. Now for the first time an organizational flaw in the SLP became obvious. The constitution provided for a membership-elected national secretary and national editor, but did not define which office had primacy in matters of party doctrine. This omission had never created problems during De Leon's tenure because there was no question about who dominated the national office. But with the accession of Petersen and

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Seidel there came a struggle for power that had in it both personal and philosophical elements, a combination that was to color many other intra-party disputes in the future.

The printed record of the trouble begins as early as the 1916 National Convention when Seidel accused Petersen of writing a letter to the Swiss socialist party in which he misrepresented a statement by Engels so ridiculously as to bring opprobrium on the party. In May 1918 the NEC removed Seidel from the editorship on the grounds of disloyalty to the party. His supporters in New York rallied to his defense and raised money to put Katz on the road to defend Seidel against Petersen's attack. This action resulted in the suspension and reorganization of Section New York without such rebels as Julius Hammer, Solon De Leon, and others. Other prominent supporters of Seidel, including Reimer, Katz, and Harrison, were soon out of the party, either by expulsion or resignation. By the end of 1918 the unity faction of the SLP was gone.

The SLP and the Russian Revolution

The October revolution in Russia affected the movement in the U.S. as profoundly as in the rest of the world. One immediate result was to quash forever the possibility of a united revolutionary socialist party consisting of the SLP and the revolutionary industrial unionist elements in the SP. The left wing of the SP, already organized with its own publications, watched events in Russia with uncritical eyes. Never very eager to embrace the organizational heirs of De Leon, it lost no time embracing the Bolsheviks, and the buzzwords in leftwing circles became "workers' and peasants' councils" rather than "socialist industrial unions."

The SLP's first reaction to the news of the October revolution appeared in the November 24, 1917, issue of the *Weekly People*. Writing ex-cathedra, Arnold Petersem spelled out a standard Marxian analysis of the successful insurrection, asserting the impossibility of establishing socialism in a pre-industrial setting like Russia and pointing out that a class conscious working class must want socialism and must organize into SIUs to seize the means of production. Petersen's conclusion was unequivocal: There was no hope for the establishment of socialism in Russia as a result of the Bolsheviks' seizure of state power. Only a world revolution could bring socialism to Russia.

But of course the matter couldn't rest there. A revolutionary socialist party had seized power in Russia backed by what appeared to be the

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majority of the urban industrial proletariat and the peasantry. Regardless of the theoretical strictures against such an event occurring or enduring, the reality of the struggle demanded that the party and the *Weekly People* react to events in Russia. Although the basic SLP position continued to be the one enunciated by Petersen, the party supported the Bolsheviks and protested Allied invasions of Russia and support of counter-revolutionaries. Then, as the Russian revolution seized the minds and imaginations of many American workers, the party sought to identify itself with the Bolsheviks, competing in this respect with the SP's leftwing, SP language federations, and an IWW contingent. Except for the SLP these coalesced into the three communist parties that existed before the Russians unified them in 1921.

Complicating matters were Lenin's attempts to woo the revolutionary wing of the international socialist movement. Beginning in January 1918, reports reached the SLP which quoted Lenin as having said that De Leon was the only theoretician to add anything to Marx and that the SIU vision of socialism was the goal of the Soviets.

Nevertheless the SLP's view of Russia remained critical in a number of ways. At no time did the SLP see the soviet system as socialist, the general idea being at first that the socialist revolution in the West would rescue Russia. Later, as this hope faded, the view arose that under the soviet system, just as under capitalism, Russia could industrialize. In the process it would create the productive forces, a proletarian majority, and most importantly, the economic organization, the SIUs, that would make socialism possible in Russia. But actual criticism of Lenin's and the Russian Communist Party's domestic policies was rare in the *Weekly People* of this era. The increasingly authoritarian Communist Party control of the economy and the working class went unnoticed or at least unmentioned.

SLP criticism was reserved for two areas about which it could speak from experience. One was the Communist Party (CP) of the U.S., which combined revolutionary rhetoric with reformist political activity and the old SP union strategy of boring from within. The SLP coined the terms "anarcho-communist" and "burlesque bolshevik" to describe the ultra-revolutionary language and confused policies of the CP of this era. The other criticism was leveled at the Russian Bolsheviks for their efforts to control the international socialist movement. The SLP officially withdrew from the Second International in 1919. Later that year the Bolsheviks launched the Third International, the Comintern. The SLP did not take part in its organization. Even though the party was mentioned in the original announcement as one

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of those groups qualified to take part, it did not receive an official invitation. And it probably would not have accepted in any event, since a well-publicized statement by Zinoviev inviting anarchists and syndicalists had produced an NEC statement that this action made SLP participation impossible.

Later, at the Second Congress in 1920, the Twenty-One Points, conditions for affiliation with the Third International, were published. These effectively locked the SLP out since they set up tactical requirements based on the Russian experience. These included participation in the capitalist union movement, an underground organization, and unity, which in the case of the SLP would have required the SLP to discard its SIU program and unite with its political opponents.

The SLP made a final effort toward involvement in the international organization in 1921. It sent two prominent members, John D. Goerke and S. Smilansky, as observers to the Third Congress. Their report confirmed the view that there was no possibility of SLP participation and gave as evidence the treatment of the Communist Workers' Party of Germany (KAPD) they had witnessed. The KAPD was a breakaway from the German Communist Party and held political syndicalist positions similar to those of the SLP. They reported their pleasure at hearing the articulate representative of the KAPD ridicule the idea of boring from within capitalist unions and assert the need to build economic organizations as a framework for a socialist society. They also reported the Congress's rejection of the case presented by the KAPD, which was given three months to rejoin the official German Communist Party. It refused to knuckle under and continued as an independent party.

Typically the SLP made no effort then or later to make common cause with the KAPD and other groups opposing Lenin's international policies. However, the WIIU's *Industrial Union News* reprinted Gorter's "Open Letter to Comrade Lenin" written in response to Lenin's *Leftwing Communism: an Infantile Disorder*, which had attacked the SLP, KAPD, and the Dutch and Italian leftwing communists, many of whom had positions that in varying degrees resembled those of the SLP.

The SLP in the Illinois Coal Fields

Shortly after the war the party decided that the shotgun approach to organizing, in which organizers were sent out on national tours and stayed in a locality only a few days, was not effective. At this time

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the unrest in the southern Illinois coal fields presented a likely place to concentrate its efforts, for the party had some contacts there in the industry, especially among the language federations. From two to four English-speaking organizers were maintained in this area southeast of St. Louis, beginning in 1919, along with full-time organizers from the South Slavonian and Bulgarian Federations. Reporting to the 1920 National Convention, Petersen was optimistic: "The prospects, the results to be expected from our agitation among the coal miners, are so far reaching as to cause us almost to hold our breath."

The effort, which was financed and directed by the party rather than the WIIU, its industrial union arm, continued until May 1921, when the use of paid organizers was discontinued. The effort seems to have created some internal problems. Writing at the end of the campaign, Fred Koch (who had been in charge) pointed to such results as the large and enthusiastic meetings, the five new sections at West Frankfort, Orient, Caseyville, Sesser, and Du Quoin (all except the last of which soon lapsed). He also pointed out that the efforts in the coal fields paid off later in membership recruitment and in SLP influence among striking railroad switchmen and in a newspaper they produced.

The Death of the WIIU

By 1918 the Petersen wing of the SLP was beginning to regard the WIIU as a liability. For one thing Kattz and Reinstein, two of its most active supporters were also ardent supporters of the unity movement. And Katz, at least, was involved in the resistance to the removal of Edmund Seidel as national editor and in the resulting "disruption"--the term that came to be used to describe all dissent from national office policies. Secondly the WIIU, it was believed, siphoned off financial support from the party. Besides the expense of



Joseph and Sam Brandon (1970). Leaving the SLP in 1927, they remained committed DeLeonists. Sam is still the General Secretary of the Industrial Union Party.

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maintaining a WIIU national office, the union had begun publishing a newspaper, *The Industrial Union News* in 1912, when it was heavily involved in the first Paterson silk workers strike. This had become a weekly beginning in May 1919, and the money for publishing came from SLP members who made up the bulk of the WIIU's membership at this time.

But far more important than financial considerations in the decision to destroy the WIIU were two major disruptions involving WIIU members and issues. The first, in Jamestown, New York, involved Rudolph Katz and the section there, many of whose members were also WIIU members. The section was expelled for allegedly seeking to fuse with the SP local in a municipal election. The second occurred in Detroit, the headquarters of the WIIU. There, SLP members, led apparently by Herman Richter, the general secretary of the WIIU, protested the failure of the party's pamphlet, *The Mines to the Miners*, to mention the WIIU. The eventual result was the expulsion of Section Detroit.

Instead of quietly melting away or joining the SP as had other dissenters, the expelled Detroit members organized a new De Leonist group, and in an action that added grist to Petersen's mill, made contact with De Leonists who had been expelled or had left the party at the time Seidel had been removed. Together the dissidents organized Industrial Socialist Clubs and later formed a national organization, the Industrial Socialist League. According to the December 1920 issue of its journal, *The Industrial Socialist*, the league had branches in Chicago, Detroit, and Philadelphia together with Polish, Scandinavian, and Jewish language branches. In 1921 it apparently dissolved into the growing communist movement, Caleb Harrison, its national secretary, becoming in 1921 the first national secretary of the legal Workers [Communist] Party.

By the time the 1924 National Convention met early in May, Petersen's patience had been exhausted. The published proceedings tell the story. In a forty-page review of the historical record of the WIIU as he saw it and of the correspondence, he referred to the WIIU as "a menace to the SLP." The convention then effectively repudiated the WIIU. In its own convention later that month the WIIU obligingly liquidated itself, its membership having declined to around one hundred.

5: Petersen in Charge 1925-1945

By 1925 the party's attempts to intervene directly in the labor movement had stopped. The concentration on the southern Illinois coal miners had fizzled, and the end of the WIIU meant that the hopes for increased membership would rest on traditional methods of political agitation. Symptomatic was the publication in 1925 of an envelope-size pamphlet, *The Party's Work*, by Verne L. Reynolds, perennial national organizer and three times candidate for President or Vice-President. Most interesting is the amount of space allotted to arranging outdoor meetings and preparing and delivering soapbox speeches. Besides the efforts of the local sections in this direction, capable outdoor speakers like Adolph Silver, John P. Quinn, and Reynolds were hired as full-time organizers and toured nationwide, remaining in a locality usually for less than a month and then moving on.

Sowing the Seeds

The other principal means of agitation was leaflet distribution, which multiplied during this period even though party membership declined. Most were printed on the party presses at 45 Rose Street in New York, and both publishing and distribution statistics were kept and reported to the annual NEC sessions and quadrennial national conventions. The topics were in keeping with the party's view of itself as an educator. One of the large leaflets, "The Greatest Robbery in History," still in print as late as 1980, was a lucid, condensed, and illustrated explanation of how the capitalist extracts surplus value from his workers. Others, "Anarcho-Communism" and "The Socialist Labor Party vs. the Socialist Party," reflected the ongoing competition with the SP and CP. Many leaflets for general distribution dealt with workers' problems like "The Machine and Unemployment" and

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"Inflation and Wages." Leaflets like the "Government of the Future," "Industrial Unionism," and "Workers, Organize for Industrial Government" explained the party's program for a socialist society. Still others attacked capitalist unionism: "A Marine Workers Industrial Union" and "Old versus New Unionism" in 1932, "C.I.O.: The Road to Fascism" 1936, and "The Union Jack Built" 1943. The approaching war prompted "War" and "War Means Dictatorship" 1936, "The Labor Draft" and "Labor Draft is Slavery" 1942, "Post-War Crisis" 1943, and "After the War -- What?" 1944.

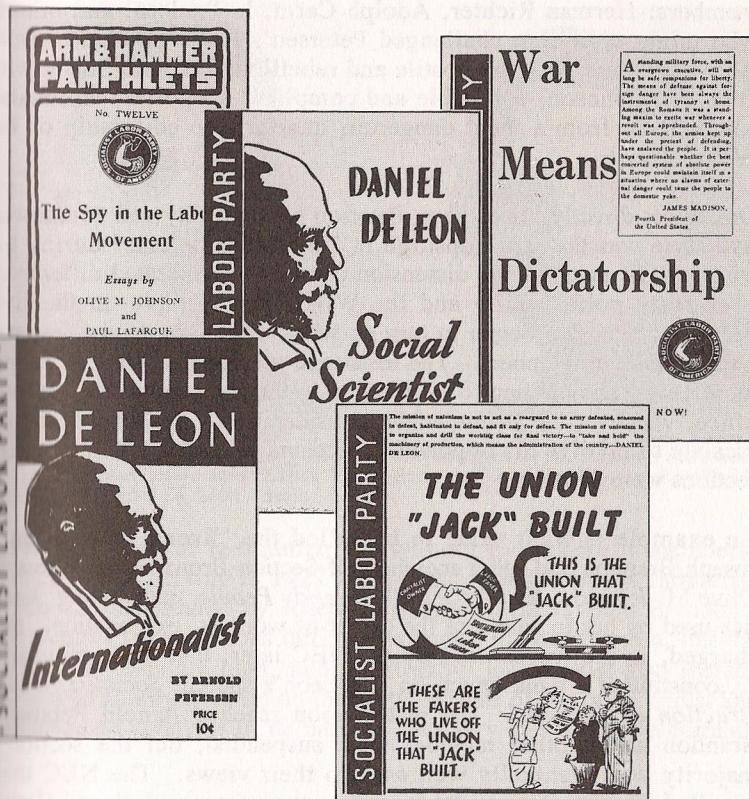
The emphasis on participation in election campaigns that had marked the De Leon era continued, although it was difficult to regard them as successful even by minor party standards. The SP vote continued to dwarf that of the SLP. Moreover the party was plagued with ill luck in its national candidates. Both Arthur Reimer, the 1916 presidential candidate and Caleb Harrison, candidate for Vice-President, were participants in the 1918 disruption and were soon out of the party. A tragedy occurred in 1928, when Frank T. Johns, the presidential candidate, speaking outdoors in Bend, Oregon, dived into the nearby Deschutes River to rescue a drowning boy and was himself drowned.

While street meetings declined as a means of agitation during this period, leaflet distribution increased from an average of 800,000 per year in the 1920s to nearly four million in 1943, an average year. The change was positive in one respect. A member didn't have to be a great speaker or writer to distribute leaflets. Any member who could stand on a street corner or at a factory gate became a front line agitator. Another advantage was to increase greatly the potential audience for forthrightly presented revolutionary socialist ideas.

Millions of American workers during this period got their only contact with socialist ideas through an occasional SLP leaflet. This mass distribution to the general working class population illustrates one of the principal differences between the SLP and the social democrats, Leninists, and new leftists, whose agitation among the general population, on the rare occasions when it occurs, is limited to specific issues and never, so far as we know, advocates the abolition of capitalism and establishment of a socialist society.

But leaflet distribution encouraged two retrograde tendencies among the members. One was the withdrawal from the face-to-face verbal agitation and debate with members of left groups that was characteristic of an earlier period; the other was to increase acceptance of authoritarian tendencies in the party by becoming a sort of transmission belt for leaflets that expressed the thinking of the national office. Thus

Petersen in Charge 1925-1945/51



The nickel Arm & Hammer pamphlet appeared in 1929. The two De Leon pamphlets are from a series of hagiographic commemoration speeches by Petersen. The leaflets were typical of many distributed by the hundreds of thousands.

began a process which tended to isolate members from the world of leftist politics and from the give and take of discussion and debate.

Arnold Petersen

By 1925 control of the SLP had been consolidated in the hands of the national secretary, Arnold Petersen. The unity disruption of 1917-19 had eliminated such prominent members as Arthur Reimer, Caleb Harrison, Rudolph Katz, Boris Reinstein, Solon De Leon, and Dr. Julius Hammer, any of whom might have been a competitor for his position. The closing down--a term which accurately describes the SLP's action--of the WIIU removed another group of prominent

A standing military force, with all its expensive encumbrances, will not long be safe compensation for liberty. War is the natural and normal condition of mankind. War and conquest have been always the natural condition of society. In America there has never been a standing military to protect war whenver a strong nation has been at war. Throughout all Europe, the armies kept up under the pretense of protection, have enslaved the people. It is perhaps the most natural and logical that a powerful system of absolute power in Europe could maintain itself a long time. But it is also natural that a great danger could cause the people to turn against it.

JAMES MADISON,
Fourth President of
the United States

NOW!

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members: Herman Richter, Adolph Carm, I. Paulsen, and others, who might also have challenged Petersen's status as chief oracle. Above all, replacing the hostile and rebellious Edmund Seidel with Olive M. Johnson, a reliable and compliant supporter, eliminated competition from a most dangerous quarter: the editorship of the *Weekly People*.

One effect directly traceable to Petersen's personality and administrative style was the rapid upsurge in "internal problems" during his tenure. The unavoidable dissension caused by deepseated differences over party policy--unity and the WIIU, for example--in the first decade of his reign began to turn on what seem to be trivial disputes with individual members. The insistence on doctrinal purity became more nearly an insistence on subjection to the authority of the national office, whatever the matter under consideration. Differences would escalate to involve his opponents' sections so that eventually entire sections were expelled.

An example is what came to be called the "Bronx Disruption." Joseph Brandon and other members of Section Bronx wrote letters to Olive M. Johnson, the editor of the *Weekly People*, questioning statistics used by her to calculate the extent of workers' exploitation. She charged, in the words used by the NEC later, that their criticisms "...constituted a flank attack on [De Leon's speech] *Socialist Reconstruction of Society*." The matter soon reached Arnold Petersen. Brandon and another member were suspended, but the section's majority was eventually won over to their views. The NEC then expelled Section Bronx, the largest in the party, and placed Henry



Street corner agitators of the 20's and 30's. Left to right: Frank T. Johns, a carpenter who ran for President in 1924 and 1928. Adolph Silver, a legendary speaker who could tie up traffic. Verne L. Reynolds, Presidential candidate in 1928 (replacing Johns who lost his life trying to save a drowning boy) and 1932; he was a national organizer for two decades.



Arnold Petersen (1930), a Danish immigrant attracted to the U.S. by Mark Twain's writings; he was national secretary for fifty-five years. Olive M. Johnson, once head of the Scandinavian Socialist Labor Federation; she became editor of the *Weekly People* shortly after De Leon's death.

Kuhn in charge of reorganizing it without the dissident members. (This break occurring in 1927 led to the formation of the Industrial Union League headed by Joseph's younger brother, Sam Brandon.) The number of expulsions during this period is not available, but the figure was certainly high, and membership losses must also include those who simply gave up on the party because of the often unjust and authoritarian behavior of its national secretary and executive committee.

The SLP and the USSR

Until the very late thirties the SLP continued its generally uncritical support for the Soviet Union, basing it on the grounds that the USSR was too backward industrially for socialism. Two factors complicated the SLP's position. One was the contradictions between the official Soviet reports and those published in the capitalist press. Given the alternatives, the SLP tended to credit Soviet dispatches. The other was the conviction that internal Soviet policies had to be accepted, if not always defended, because they represented measures needed to transform backward Russia into an industrial society capable of instituting a socialist industrial union form of government. This position died hard. As late as 1938 Petersen was defending in a WP article the Moscow trial of Nikolai Bukharin and the other "traitors." At the same time, though, articles were beginning to appear in the WP questioning the direction the new 1936 Soviet Constitution was moving the USSR. As a recent, 1978, SLP pamphlet points out, the break *

came not as a result of Soviet domestic policy but of the August 1939 Nazi-Soviet Pact.

The SLP and the American Communists

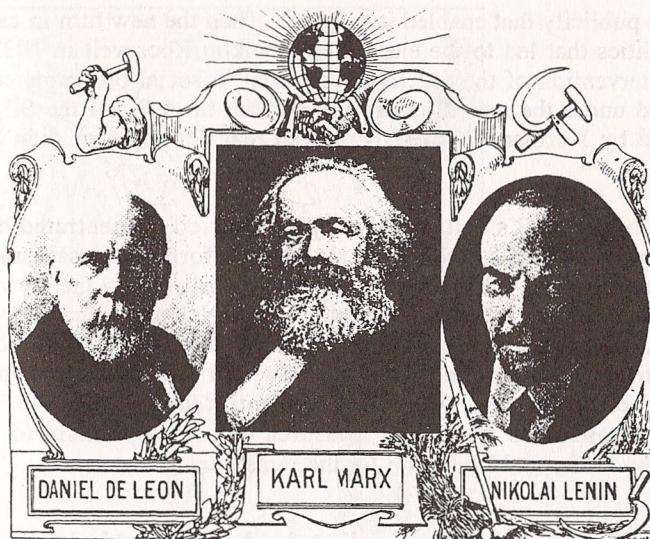
But Petersen's patience with the Soviet Union did not extend to the American Communist Party or its mother--or better, midwife--the Third International. A 1926 pamphlet, *The Socialist Labor Party and the Third International*, written as an SLP address to "...the revolutionary working class everywhere, and the Russian revolutionary workers in particular" made it very clear that the SLP regarded it as its duty to combat the "bourgeois reformism" of the Workers [Communist] Party just as it did that of the SP and the anarcho-syndicalism of the IWW.

During this period the CP replaced the SP as the party's arch-rival on the left. It never failed to provide the SLP with a target as the twists and turns of its party line alternated between ultra-revolutionary fervor and reformist united frontism. It was a convoluted trail that first opposed and then supported the New Deal and responded to every gyration of Soviet foreign policy as World War II appeared on the horizon.

The CP responded by ignoring the SLP, a policy made possible on the national level by the small size of the SLP compared to the CP and by the CP monopoly of radicalism/Marxism in the unions, academia, and the radical milieu. Here the SLP paid the price for its self-imposed



Members of Section Pontiac (Michigan) around 1930, probably mostly Bulgarian Americans. Time has obliterated the messages on the signs they are holding.



Souvenir sold by the Hungarian SLP probably in the 20s. The rare juxtaposition of SLP and Bolshevik logos symbolizes early enthusiasm for the October Revolution.

policy of non-intervention in capitalist unions and in reformist issues. Here also one can see the source of some less endearing developments in the party. One was the ongoing attempt to coopt Lenin as a supporter of DeLeonism on the basis of various approving remarks attributed to Lenin shortly after the Russian Revolution. The other, less easily documented, was the encouragement given to the deification of De Leon by the CP's Lenin worship after 1924.

The Great Depression

To the SLP as well as its competitors on the left, the stock market crash of 1929 and slow slide into what came to be termed "the Great Depression" appeared to be just another of capitalism's recurring crises. Beginning in 1930, the growth of unemployment created increasingly receptive audiences for SLP street corner speakers and leaflet distributors, sufficient to enable the party to have twenty-four organizers in the field during the 1932 presidential election campaign.

But in this period as in similar situations in the past, the party's uncompromising "capitalism-must-be-destroyed" stance limited its appeal. At the same time, the CP with its aggressive organization of unemployed workers and welfare recipients and their deployment in demonstrations under the banner of immediate relief and reform creat-

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ed the publicity that enabled it to grow. Then the new turn in capitalist politics that led to the election of Franklin Roosevelt in 1932 and the intervention of the federal government in social programs cut the ground under the radical reformism of both the CP and the SP, now headed by Norman Thomas. But even that development didn't help the SLP.

Much of the SLP's agitation during this period concentrated on the futility of reform as well as analyses of reform proposals and the motivation of the ruling class in granting them. It saw the New Deal and its complex of crash programs--the National Recovery Act (NRA)--as a step in the establishment of what De Leon had called industrial feudalism and what we now call fascism. A pamphlet published at the time, *The NRA: National Retrogression Act*, compares Roosevelt's New Deal measures to save capitalism to those taken by Hitler and Mussolini for the same purpose.

The SLP and 'Capitalist Industrial Unionism'

Along with welfare measures aimed at relieving the worst aspects of working class misery, capitalism under the New Deal sought to defuse industrial discontent by institutionalizing it through a new union policy. The NRA's Section 7a required employers to engage in collective bargaining. The reluctance of the AFL to organize unskilled workers in mass production industries under the provisions of the act resulted in the organization of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) under the leadership of John L. Lewis, the president of the miners' union and a conservative trade unionist.

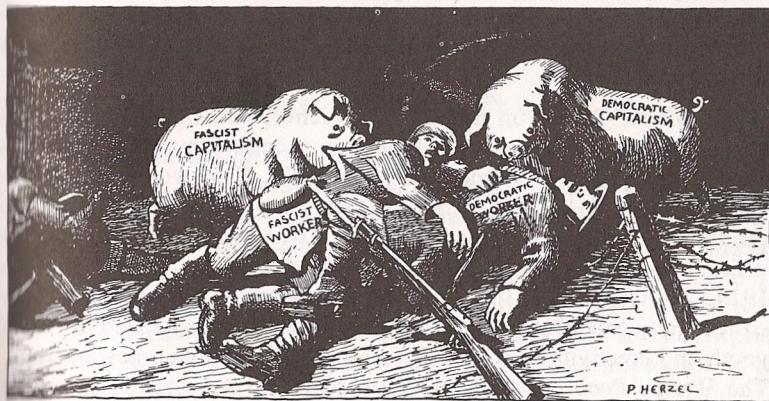
The party reacted to this campaign and the CIO's appropriation of the term "industrial unionism" by pointing out, first of all, that unions which accepted capitalism as a given were a far cry from the revolutionary industrial unions advocated by the SLP and, secondly, that, to catch a glimpse of their future fate, the working class should look at the sad condition of miners and textile workers who belonged to already existing capitalist industrial unions.

The party also saw political implications in capitalism's encouragement and control of the new industrial unions through its political state. In 1935 when the NRA with its Section 7a had been found unconstitutional, Congress immediately passed the Wagner Labor Relations Act, which provided for a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) with life and death power over unions. This new government involvement in the relationship between capitalism and the

Petersen in Charge 1925-1945/57



The top cartoon was drawn by Melvin Zipfel, the bottom two by Paul Herzel. The top two were inspired by papal acceptance of Franco's fascism. Such overt hostility to clericalism has disappeared from the party press in recent years.



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unions, the SLP warned, was similar to the corporate state of Fascist Italy and the Labor Front of Nazi Germany. All three were designed to contain the class struggle.

The Weekly People

After the demise of the *Daily People* in 1914, the weekly edition, which had been issued along with the daily, continued as the main journalistic voice of the SLP. Its circulation during this period varied from a low of about nine thousand in 1925 to a high of 11,450 in 1945. (These figures are derived from sales reports and include bundle orders.)

Its importance as the weekly expression of SLP thinking made the post of editor potentially the most influential in the party; witness De Leon's position. Like the national secretary, he or she was elected by the national convention and approved by the membership in a national referendum every four years. In Olive M. Johnson, Petersen had no rival. She seems to have been a marginally competent editor, fiercely loyal to him. Her willingness to step into the breach as temporary editor when Seidel was deposed made her a sort of heroine, and she was elected in 1920 and re-elected in 1924, 1928, 1932 and 1936 without opposition.

Then in the fall of 1937 Petersen apparently became conscious of flaws in her work. He wrote her a letter pointing out inaccuracies in an editorial she had written about Russia and the Russian Revolution. Couched in his usual tactless style, it was sufficient to cause her to tender her resignation, as it was probably intended to do. A bit later Petersen accused her of plagiarizing an article she had prepared for the party's 1938 *1st of May* magazine from Commons's *History of Labor in the United States*. This forced the issue so that her resignation took effect in February 1938, Emil Teichert filling in as temporary editor.

*not in
b. blog.*

The 1938 NEC Session nominated Teichert and Eric Hass, a most successful national organizer who was a competent writer and, as party employee, was immediately available. Hass won in the referendum, the last ballot for national office offering more than one candidate (Petersen had no opposition after 1916). He became the fifth editor of the *Weekly People*, the third since De Leon's death in 1914. He was to hold the post for thirty years, longer than any other editor including De Leon. Hass brought a much needed spirit of youth and creativity to 61 Cliff Street, the new national headquarters. The *Weekly People*, which had retained its format almost unchanged

since De Leon's day, received a facelift with a new masthead, more dynamic headlines, and a new approach to news stories that emphasized and analyzed current events.

Along with the improvements in the *Weekly People* came a spate of new pamphlets and leaflets, inspired in part by the rapid movement of events: the Hitler-Stalin Pact, the CIO organizing drives, and the approaching war. New York Labor News, the party's publishing house, was revitalized during these two decades. The envelope-size Arm and Hammer pamphlets, begun during World War I, were published extensively, and sales especially after the onset of the depression rose encouragingly from a low of \$2,383 in 1930 to a high of \$8,943 in 1943. These figures may not seem impressive unless one realizes that the bulk of sales were of five and ten cent pamphlets and were carried on almost entirely by the members.

The SLP and World War Two

It took no special Marxist understanding to see that World War I, the League of Nations, and the disarmament talks that followed it had not solved the problem of war. Public apprehension of the coming war was widespread, and the party responded in its publications. In October 1937 it published a pamphlet, actually a party document, *Manifesto on War*, subtitled *Decay and Corruption of International Capitalism*, which analyzed the causes of the preliminary bouts going on in Spain, Ethiopia, and China.

Two years later, in 1939, the Second World War began, and the party brought out a new pamphlet, *Down with War: A Declaration on the Outbreak of War by the Socialist Labor Party*. Another party manifesto issued in pamphlet form, *War and Poverty, the Brood of Capitalism*, traced the progress of U.S. capitalism's involvement in the war. Published on the eve of the passage of national conscription, it opposed the draft as an "anti-democratic, Hitleristic measure being crammed down the throats of the American People."

The World War and Soviet Russia, another declaration of the party dated June 26, 1941, shouted from the cover in large print that the "Essential Imperialist Character of the Second World War [was] UNCHANGED!" It asserted that the Hitler-Stalin Pact of August 1939 had prompted the invasion of Poland and ignited World War II by guaranteeing to Hitler that he would not have to fight a two-front war. The pamphlet went on to express sympathy with Russian workers but seemed to take some satisfaction in describing the confusion at the editorial offices of the CP's *Daily Worker*.

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The entry of the U.S. into World War II was analyzed in the December 20, 1941, issue of the WP in an NEC statement under the headline, "The Socialist Labor Party's Declaration on the Spread of World-Wide War," which occupied the whole front page. Beginning with a reference to the "Japanese bandits'" attack on Hawaii, the declaration explained the cause of capitalism's wars. It went on to hope for the success of Russian workers in expelling both the Nazi armies and the Stalinist bureaucracy.

After noting that "There is nothing in the present situation indicating that the working class--as a class--is ready or willing to take the step which would change the present conflict from a struggle between rivals and competitors to a world struggle for complete social and economic equality and freedom," it resolved to continue the party's work of bringing the message to American workers that socialism was the only hope of humanity and that capitalism must be destroyed. The statement was published as a pamphlet and widely circulated during and after the war as *Socialism, Hope of Humanity*.

The almost total evaporation of overt working class opposition to the war, referred to in the NEC statement above, shaped SLP treatment of the war in the *Weekly People*. It avoided what would have been the suicidal path of explicit opposition to the war and to military conscription. Articles about the war concentrated on capitalist profiteering, working class economic losses, no-strike pledges, and efforts to extend military conscription to include a labor draft. Neither the party nor the *Weekly People* counseled members and sympathizers to seek conscientious objector (CO) status. Only a few members became COs, and by the war's end nearly a hundred were in the armed forces.

But capitalism's attempt to impose a labor draft was a different matter. A brief rash of early wartime strikes provided the excuse for such a measure, and the Wadsworth-Austin Bill, introduced in Congress in 1942, resulted in two new SLP pamphlets: *Labor Conscription: Involuntary Servitude* by Petersen and *Labor Draft, Step to Industrial Slavery* by Hass. Printed in editions of fifteen thousand and eighteen thousand respectively (compared to the usual NYLN press runs of two or three thousand), they were widely advertised and sold. A shortened version of Hass's pamphlet was published as a four-page leaflet in an edition of 475,000.

All this activity took place in the midst of a total collapse of "left-wing" opposition to the war. Both the CP and SP eagerly embraced this latest war for democracy, their members in the union bureaucracies backing wartime labor austerity.

6: The Post-War Party 1945-1969

By the end of the war, the party looked forward to increased activity and effectiveness. There had been a feeling in the SLP during the war that to a certain extent the party was marking time until normal conditions would once again prevail. SLP tactics were predicated upon open, legal agitation; opportunities for this had undoubtedly been curtailed by the war. The party had unequivocally opposed American participation in the war but only by resolution. It was anticipated that constraints on open air meetings would end and that workers would be more receptive to the party program, now that the capitalist class could no longer enlist the workers on behalf of a struggle against the common Fascist menace.

In addition, resources, such as newsprint, would be freed up, as would be the young ~~five~~ percent of the membership caught up by military conscription. (At the war's end, there were seventy members in the armed forces and three conscientious objectors. Two members were in prisoner-of-war camps in Germany, and four were in American military prisons.)

A third result of the war's end was expected: the virtually certain depression that would follow the artificially maintained war prosperity. This would validate the party's program and make workers more receptive, as it had during the Great Depression. Indeed, one party document stated unequivocally that "[t]he complete collapse of capitalism [is] imminent..." and recommended that general agitational activity be increased in scope and intensity.

In May 1945, with the war in Europe almost over, Petersen reported to the NEC that the party was financially sound. This unique situation resulted from the Three Days Wages Fund for unexpected emergencies that had been established earlier during the war, from unspent



Arnold Petersen, national secretary (1914-1969), foremost exponent of Marxism-DeLeonism and formidable opponent of organizational indiscipline.

presidential campaign funds, and from full employment and even overtime work that enabled party members to contribute more heavily. Petersen and his old friend A.L. Zimmerman (National Auditing Committee) had never forgotten the party's desperate financial crisis in 1914. Since lean depression years seemed to lie ahead, the NEC adopted Petersen's recommendation that a New Machinery Fund be established so that the party could replace its antiquated printing equipment.

Unlike many radical organizations, membership dues in the SLP were not onerous, generally one dollar per month, with exemptions readily granted for members unable to pay. However, there were special funds for every election campaign as well as for contingencies such as the New Machinery Fund. Increasing attention was paid to fund-raising affairs. In some areas (such as Detroit, with its three language federation branches and the American section), a picnic or social with collection talk occurred every weekend. The Greater Northeast Thanksgiving Bazaars were perhaps the most elaborate affairs, frequently including professional entertainers. The role of the non-member "sympathizer" in raising hundreds of thousands of dollars annually was crucial, and so were the local entertainment committees

The Post-War Party 1945-1969/63

and Weekly People Clubs (local groups of women members and wives of members who organized fund-raising socials).

Discontent with Petersen

Over the years, the national secretary had become the office manager of national headquarters, and it was he who hired personnel, adjudicated disputes, and made decisions about the day to day operation of the various departments, sometimes including the editorial office. Relations between Petersen and Hass had been generally harmonious, but they were ruffled by Hass's report to the 1945 NEC meeting in which he stated that his work had trebled, an assertion to which Petersen took exception. Hass, in turn, questioned Petersen's right to review or correct the report of another national officer.

Dissatisfaction among some members with Petersen's failure to condemn Stalinist Russia outright and with his management style crystallized the following year. Section New York appointed a committee to consider a resolution introduced by Nathan Dershowitz (an active member recently returned from the army) calling on the party to withdraw two Petersen pamphlets deemed insufficiently critical of the Soviet Union. The committee was made up of Hass, Aaron Orange (1940 candidate for Vice President and in all other contexts a

WEEKLY PEOPLE

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY

WEEKLY PEOPLE

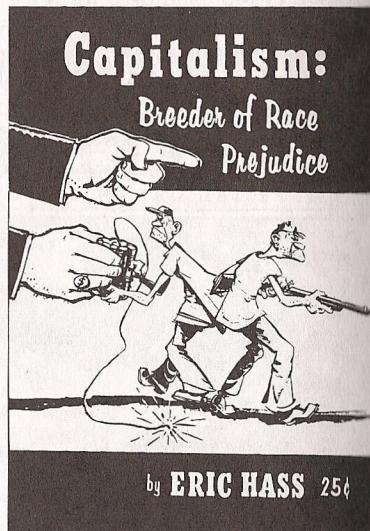
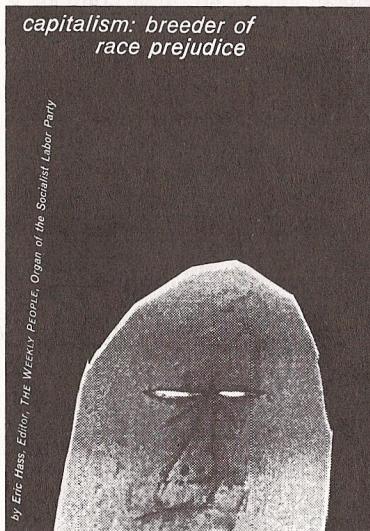
OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY



The *Weekly People* masthead (top) was designed by Milton Herder in the early 50s and later redone by Walter Steinhilber. The scene from a 1948 Socialist Labor Party banquet shows 1) Eric Hass, 2) Steinhilber, 3) Herder.

Petersen supporter) and Emil Teichert. The committee, with Teichert dissenting, supported the resolution and the full section adopted it. Dershowitz and others lobbied for support from the sections in Brooklyn and the Bronx. The Sub-Committee, however, rejected the resolution and issued a ruling which, in apparent contradiction of the party constitution, restricted the right of members to address meetings of other sections. Dershowitz then proposed that Section New York act to remove Petersen from office.

The resulting controversy united dissidents in different parts of the country, and numerous documents and appeals were circulated followed by detailed denunciations of "disruption" from the national office. By the middle of 1947, the party had lost Section Cleveland and barely retained the Chicago section. Dozens of members left or were expelled. Several local non-SLP DeLeonist organizations were formed, but they were unable to unite despite Petersen's claim that a master plot was involved. Most of the participants in the 1947 split disappeared, perhaps disheartened both by the inability of the local groups to get together and by the failure of SLP members to respond to the dissidents' appeals for organizational reform. The organized DeLeonist movement outside the SLP was eventually embodied solely in the revived Industrial Union Party headed by Sam Brandon, and this also disappeared in a few years.



Two editions of Eric Hass's *Capitalism: Breeder of Race Prejudice*. The 1961 cover (left) was too avant-garde for party decision-makers. The 1964 edition cover has a cartoon by Walter Steinhilber.

The Post-War Party 1945-1969/65

Once past the difficulties caused by the 1947 split, the SLP faced new obstacles created by the prevailing Cold War climate. Although the SLP was not officially classified as a subversive organization (the result, at least in part, of the party's emphasis on constitutional means of initiating revolution), it by no means was immune to persecution by followers of Senator Joseph McCarthy and other political opportunists. Leaflet distributors and nomination signature gatherers were harassed and arrested, and many members were hounded by employers and others for their beliefs. Veteran organizer John P. Quinn stated that successful outdoor meetings had become a thing of the past, and in some locales it became difficult to hire halls for meetings. Arnold Petersen, whose incumbency as national secretary now extended back thirty-five years, recalled the red scare after World War One and predicted that the current "witch hunts" would die down. It was decided that members could sign "loyalty oaths" under protest if necessary to save their jobs.

The Hass Candidacies

National candidates were usually articulate and energetic party members who could remain away from their jobs during the summer and fall of a presidential election year. Finding someone like Ed Teichert (1948 presidential candidate) who could take leave from his job as a steel worker was not always easy. In addition, the policy was to choose only American-born members, because the constitutional provision that immigrants may not serve as President could have caused problems getting the party on the ballot. This prevented the choice of certain highly competent national organizers such as John P. Quinn and Joseph Pirincin (immigrants from England and Yugoslavia, respectively) who would logically have been candidates.

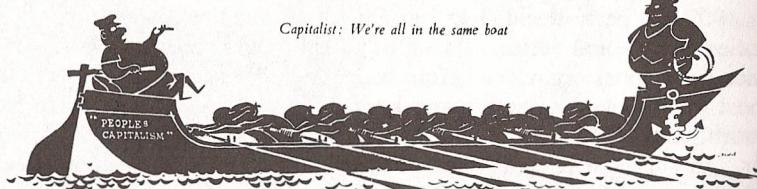
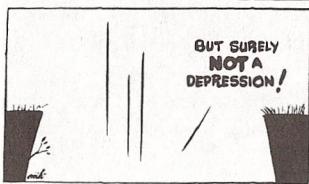
In 1952 the party decided to run Eric Hass for President despite his duties as national editor. Hass, of course, had had extensive experience as national organizer before becoming editor and was one of the most popular and effective speakers. To accommodate his editorial duties, he campaigned mostly on weekends, frequently travelling by air. In subsequent campaigns he spent more time campaigning, and more of his editorial work was shouldered by assistant John Timm. Although the party was on the ballot in twenty-three states (a figure never to be approached again), Hass and running mate Stephen Emery received an unremarkable 30,426 votes. Yet this was in the midst of the McCarthy period. Also, in many of the states where the SLP was on the ballot little agitation could be organized, while in



YOUTH WILL BE SERVED!



OUT OF WORK!



Capitalist: We're all in the same boat

Some of the best *Weekly People* cartoons appeared after World War II. "Youth will be Served" is a look at conscription and war by Walter Steinhilber. The one on the semantics of economic crises is by Milton Herder. The rest are by Budd Steinhilber. The skull and unemployed worker have appeared in non-SLP journals. This version of the slave galley was modified by the Australian SLP.

The Post-War Party 1945-1969/67

some states like Ohio and California, where the party had many local branches, severe legal requirements kept most minor parties off the ballot. Hass's talents as a candidate were widely recognized, and Petersen commended him for his work in this area. He was the SLP nominee for president four consecutive times from 1952 to 1964. Only Verne Reynolds had been a national candidate as many as three times. Hass became especially adept with press interviews and radio and television appearances, his editorial experience enabling him to create and rework scripts, frequently on the spur of the moment.

A basic campaign pattern developed. Great effort was expended to place the SLP on the ballot in as many states as possible. Many fund-raising affairs were held to support the campaign, the major affair being in New York around May Day during the national con-



Eric Hass, national organizer, editor of the *Weekly People* from 1938-1968 and Presidential candidate four times; he resigned (and was expelled) from the SLP in 1969. Georgia Cozzini, Vice-Presidential candidate with Hass in 1956 and 1960.

vention. The campaign goals were always much too optimistic (\$200,000 in 1952), but substantial amounts were raised, leading outsiders to suspect that wealthy backers were involved. When possible, the party employed a campaign manager, such as Nathan Karp, a charismatic, intellectually-gifted clothing worker who had great administrative ability and who may have possessed the best knowledge of minor party electoral law of anyone in the country. The party was also fortunate in having members knowledgeable in

advertising and graphic design such as Walter Steinhilber and Milton Herder. (These two were also in large part responsible for the improved appearance of the *Weekly People* and SLP pamphlets.)

Campaigns were now shorter, essentially beginning on Labor Day weekend with Hass "touring" the country from one end (frequently returning to New York for broadcasts or other commitments) and the vice-presidential candidate beginning a tour from the other. Each candidate was generally accompanied by an assistant, usually a national or state organizer. Local activities were often planned to coincide with the scheduled appearance of a national candidate. The large active sections often held relatively successful press conferences, lectures at local colleges and high schools and fund-raising picnics. Small inactive sections composed of a handful of oldtimers had their morale boosted by the local appearance of a national candidate. Just before the election, the campaigns would peak with one candidate appearing at a rally sponsored by the New York sections and the other at a similar rally in California. (Lest the term "rally" suggest huge public gatherings, it should be noted that these were well-attended lectures with audiences of a hundred or so at best.)

The election itself was anticlimactic, with the press largely ignoring the votes for minority party candidates. Election returns came in slowly, (polling officials frequently ignored write-in votes) and the party vote when finally known was disappointingly small for the immense effort expended. However, the number of new contacts received and the quantity of leaflets distributed (in the millions) were at a quadrennial peak. The next May or June, the national secretary would report to the NEC on the campaign, stating among other things that there was an unspent surplus remaining in the campaign fund. Petersen was a fiscal conservative.

The SLP in the 60s

After his last campaign in 1964, Eric Hass wrote a brief letter regarding his impressions of the party and the membership. They were not encouraging. "I could not help but note that the membership is aging rapidly and that youth replacements are far from adequate to carry on the work...unless we are able to bring in a fresh contingent of members we will not be able to wage a national campaign four years hence comparable to the campaign of 1964." Indeed, the slowly decreasing membership showed little turnover

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compared with that of other radical organizations and as the individual members aged, so did the average age of the membership. Many of the young persons who did join were sons and daughters of members. The three language federations, Bulgarian, South Slavonian and Hungarian, which had been mainstays of the movement, were especially hard hit, since immigration from the "old country," now under "Communist" control, had dropped to a trickle. (The refugees from the 1956 Hungarian revolution proved to be uninterested.) Attempts to place Socialist Labor Federation literature in libraries in Bulgaria, Hungary and Yugoslavia or to fulfill subscription requests in those countries were unavailing in the face of Stalinist censorship.

McCarthyism had ebbed, as Petersen had predicted, and the 60s were a period of radical ferment beginning with the freedom rides and sit-ins. It built up with the student free speech demonstrations in Berkeley and the creation of Students for a Democratic Society and numerous other radical and revolutionary groups. The SLP benefited very little from all this. Other "Old Left" groups, such as the Communist Party, had similar aging problems. Unlike the SLP, they took advantage of the numerous demonstrations and made special accommodations--compromises, perhaps--to interest young people. While the Old Left was largely scorned as being irrelevant, enough young left-turning idealists were attracted to such groups as the Socialist Workers Party and the Industrial Workers of the World to give them new vigor.

Through its press the SLP strongly supported the cause of civil rights for Blacks. However, it declined to participate in such activities as anti-segregation sit-ins and freedom bus rides. It felt these were diversions from the socialist movement, which alone could solve the problems of racism and poverty. Its appeal to minorities was wholly unsuccessful. There seems to have been only one active long-term black member during this period, a Philadelphia longshoreman, and no Asian members. Parenthetically, the appeal to women workers was much more successful, and they became increasingly more prominent in party activity. Georgia Cozzini, who was twice a vice-presidential candidate and member of the NEC, was the most notable SLP woman since Olive M. Johnson.

The party's agitational techniques prevented it from reaching those young people who were challenging the status quo. Not only were party members prevented from participating in demonstrations; restrictions even were placed on leafletting on such occasions. The official guideline stated that members could distribute leaflets (and

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sell literature) at demonstrations but only in such a way that no one could confuse them with the actual participants. Furthermore, the leaflets used were stock items that condemned war and racism but lacked immediate relevance to particular issues inspiring the demonstrations, and they seemed old fashioned and jargonistic to most participants. Petersen, in particular, seems to have been turned off by these marches and demonstrations, calling one of them "senseless, emotional and anarchistic." His attitude largely shaped party policy.

The 1967-69 Split

A new wave of dissension in the SLP began in the late 60s, with results strikingly similar to those of the 1947 split. Eric Hass's report to the NEC in 1966 again aroused contention and, as in 1945, it presaged large scale discord. He criticized the inability of the party to analyze "*our way of thinking or the quality of our education[al] methods...*" (his emphasis), and he was in turn accused of taking an anti-party stand.

In February 1967, Section Palo Alto (California) proposed several constitutional amendments designed to make the party more democratic. The national secretary submitted them reluctantly to the other sections, recommending that they not be seconded. In April, Section Palo Alto was accused of participating in a major anti-Vietnam demonstration and of preparing a leaflet for the demonstration without having it first reviewed by the national office. Palo Alto Organizer Nick Simon wrote a personal letter to Arnold Petersen calling on him to resign. The section refused to condemn its organizer, and by autumn it was expelled. Opposition developed regarding Petersen's alleged authoritarian management and the SLP's supposed inability to modernize its agitational techniques. By 1969 this dissension had spread to other California sections. In New York a pro-Hass group was rebuffed in its attempts to modify party policy and rebellion spread to Philadelphia and other areas. Some of the New York members left the SLP and joined with remnants of the Industrial Union Party to form the Daniel De Leon League.

By the end of 1969 the split had resulted in the loss of a section and scores of members. The attempt by ex-members, sympathizers and a couple of SLP members who never left the party to set up a new national organization proceeded a little further than it had in 1947. At its founding convention in 1970, Socialist Reconstruction claimed eighty-two members in half a dozen local affiliates. However, basic

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disagreement developed between two wings, one committed to an orthodox SLP-like organization without Petersen and the other willing to consider such diverse programs as those of anarchism and Trotskyism. (Needless to say, the unorthodox wing was itself badly divided.) Socialist Reconstruction quickly lost its momentum and soon reverted to a renewal of the Industrial Union Party under the leadership of Sam Brandon. In April 1969 Eric Hass resigned from the Socialist Labor Party citing an "unwholesome" concentration of power that practically eliminated debate and dissent. The resignation was rejected, and he was expelled.

End of the Petersen Era

Arnold Petersen submitted his resignation as National Secretary in February 1969. He was replaced by his assistant, Nathan Karp, on April 15. Petersen had served for fifty-five years and was nearly eighty-four years old. For many years, the membership had consistently declined, and in 1963 it was below a thousand. Although enemies of Petersen attributed this to his policies, one might consider the far greater decline in the fortunes of the Socialist Party. Compared to the Communist Party and various Trotskyist groups, the SLP had been a model of stability.

More serious was the aging of the membership, particularly of the foreign born. The Hungarian Socialist Labor Federation (SLF) disbanded in 1956, although its publication, *A Munkas*, lasted into the 60s, long enough to publish a fiftieth anniversary issue. The Bulgarian SLF disbanded in 1969, and by the end of 1970 the last language federation, the South Slavonian, was gone. Under Arnold Petersen, the party had dropped its involvement in the organized labor movement. With changing life styles, workers were no longer reached by street meetings but primarily by leaflets. New York City, which once had had numerous branches down to the Assembly District level, now contained only the Manhattan and Brooklyn sections. The party's members were not only older and less likely to be foreign-born; like the rest of the population, relatively fewer of them were blue collar workers. Lower level "professionals" like teachers and engineers became more numerous. But white collar workers were still workers, and the party's goal of a stateless industrial commonwealth remained unchanged.

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As in the changing of the guard more than a half century earlier when Arnold Petersen became national secretary and Edmund Seidel succeeded De Leon as editor, the SLP was in capable and experienced hands. Nathan Karp had served for six years as Petersen's assistant, and John Timm had been editorial assistant during most of Hass's thirty-year tenure. They presumably could be depended upon to continue in the Petersen tradition.

The party had lost sixty to eighty members in the 1967-69 split, many of them young and enthusiastic--the members who would have become the backbone of the party in the coming decades. Nevertheless, Karp reported at the 1972 Convention that the disruption had had no lasting effect on the party and even took some comfort in the internal problems plaguing the dissidents' new group. Indeed, the repercussions had ended by 1972 except for the sour taste in many mouths. The more vocal and visible dissidents had resigned or dropped out, and the disaffected, having watched the dissenting groups unravel, remained in the SLP resolved to make the best of it. But the best was not very good. Membership continued to dwindle as it had for years and so did the work of the party. In his report to the 1972 convention, Karp also complained that in the four years since the last convention (and since the departure of Hass) the party had not published a single new pamphlet or leaflet.

But the real problem was the *Weekly People*. John Timm suffered from two serious handicaps as editor. One was a lack of help; he was badly overworked, at times getting out the paper almost single-handedly. The second was his inadequacy as a writer when compared to Hass. At best he was a plodder who manufactured socialist news articles from the events of the day. The problem came to a head two weeks before the 1973 NEC Session was to convene in May. Nation-

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al Secretary Nathan Karp, with no previous warning, handed National Editor Timm a sixty-seven-page report attacking Timm's competency as a writer and Marxist. This he would be presenting to the NEC and the party at the forthcoming session of the NEC. The attack, complete with multiple examples and profuse documentation, utterly destroyed any possibility of Timm's continuing as editor and was so perceived by him. He wrote a short report to the NEC defending himself and then resigned the editorship effective immediately. Like all his predecessors since De Leon, he left under a cloud, accused, like Hass, of deserting his post.

Later Karp, who apparently did not expect the resignation, would describe his panic when he realized that he would have to produce the *Weekly People* without an editor. With the help of Mary Jane Grohs and Robert Bills, his two assistants, he managed to get out the next issue, at the same time--one would gather from reading his account in the 1976 Convention proceedings--gaining some insight into the conditions under which Timm had labored. The emergency became a continuing nightmare in which all other party matters were sacrificed to getting out the *Weekly People*. He resolved the problem by recruiting his son Stanley, not then a member, and Dick Bell, a school teacher from Denver, and forming an editorial staff, which acted in place of the elected editor called for by the party's constitution.

Another part of the crisis of 1973 was the decision to scrap the idea of a party press in the physical sense and to move the national office. The former decision was forced on the party by the cost of running its outdated printing plant. As to the latter, the belief persists among the members that Karp and his staff proposed the move to escape the New York stronghold of the Petersen loyalists, but actually the proposal to move--although not to Palo Alto, California--had been prepared for the 1973 NEC Session before Timm left.

The 1976 National Convention

The first evidence of a change in party positions came in an editorial, "Vietnam Victory," in which the *Weekly People* supported the Vietnam national liberation movement in contravention of the party's understood position that such movements were inherently non-progressive. At the regular 1975 NEC Session, Karp defended the editorial citing historical precedents in party action and in De Leon's writings, a strategy he would use throughout the coming period of change. After Karp's impassioned defense the NEC endorsed the editorial unanimously, opening the gate to a vastly increased cover-

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age of--and unfortunately, uncritical support for--such national liberation movements worldwide, with special emphasis on Africa.

This was the beginning of a profound transformation in the thinking of Nathan Karp. Influenced perhaps by both the dire outlook for the party and the young members of the national office staff, he made a remarkable report to the 1976 National Convention. Delivered in the most emphatic language possible, it castigated both the membership and the NEC for their failure to respond to National Office initiatives to rededicate their lives to their revolutionary cause and to re-examine their and the party's tactics in the light of contemporary conditions and events. Essentially Karp was demanding that this party of old timers repudiate not just the tactics of the past but, by implication, the leaders of the past including Arnold Petersen and his lieutenants who had loyally manned the NEC and its Sub-Committee.

In one far-reaching response the 1976 National Convention resolved that "the convention acknowledges that a significant change in the party's analysis of present conditions has indeed occurred..." and that this results from "...an improved application of Marxist analysis..." The resolution made possible a high speed evolution away from the positions and tactics the party had used for decades. The convention also resolved that the conditions demanded that national conventions be held annually instead of quadrennially (as had been the policy since 1896) and that NEC sessions be held during convention years.

At the 1976 NEC Session a new policy of internal party democracy, which included a secret ballot in elections and referenda, was introduced with some fanfare along with some comments about the bad old days and indirect references to Petersen and his authoritarian control of the party.

Rebellion in the Ranks

The center of opposition to the new policies was New York and northern New Jersey, perhaps because the members there knew Karp and were less in awe of him. The first insurrection involved Section Monmouth County, New Jersey, where members supported the changes but offended Karp by criticizing the tone he had used in correspondence with dissenters. But far more serious for Karp was the opposition from Sections New York and Kings County (Brooklyn). The old NEC Sub-Committee, through which Petersen had controlled the party for half a century, had been drawn from these sections, and the members were well known and highly respected as writers and speakers for the party.

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Karp met the New York Tendency, as he labeled it, head on at the Chicago national convention in May 1977. In his opening report he identified them: "...a group based in New York which has uniformly opposed all proposals to change the party's course..." and "...denies that the party's current crisis is in any way connected to our past theoretical, practical, or organizational activities."

The New York Tendency answered with resolutions of "The Special Committee of Sections Kings County [Brooklyn] and New York" that forcefully described the new positions as "changes" and "reversals" in party policy--something the Karpites had denied--and asserted that they "constituted decidedly incorrect departures from the party's basic Marxist DeLeonist revolutionary principles..."

The entire matter went to the convention's Committee on the State of the Organization, which consisted of Karp supporters to a man. Despite impassioned debate and argument by the New Yorkers, the outcome was quite clear before the hearings ended. The committee not only rejected their resolution but condemned the manner in which it had been drawn up, recommending that the two sections be censured. Recognizing defeat and convinced that Karp's statements about his efforts earlier to meet with the New York members (which they privately branded as lies) would be accepted at face value by the delegates, the New York Tendency remained silent for the most part. The report was accepted overwhelmingly by the convention.

The Aftermath

The result of Karp's victory became apparent within a few weeks as the old guard began to resign. Lost entirely through resignation were Sections Waltham, Massachusetts, and Greensburg, Pennsylvania. But more serious was the loss of all but a corporal's guard in New York City. Section Kings County (Brooklyn) was disbanded, and Section New York (Manhattan) was reduced to ten members. To the loss by resignation must be added those who quietly allowed themselves to be dropped for non-payment of dues. Also lost were the greater part of Sections Minneapolis and Monmouth County, both of which had opposed Karp's management style. Perhaps just as serious was the silent disaffection. Karp had won the battle but had alienated many of the members who in their hearts opposed the changes but couldn't bring themselves to leave.

Also lost was the Canadian SLP, which had become the only vocal source of opposition to the changes after the 1977 convention.

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There, the national secretary, Alan Sanderson, a fraternal delegate at the 1977 Convention, along with his supporters in Toronto produced a 250-page mimeographed document to combat the changes. Published in April 1978 and entitled *Recent Changes in the Socialist Labor Party of America (1975-1977)*, it consisted largely of lengthy excerpts from past *Weekly People* articles, party resolutions, and other SLP sources which were contrasted to current material to show the changes in party positions. A copy was mailed to each member of the Canadian party.

At its October 1978 session in Palo Alto, the American SLP's NEC proposed a joint meeting of delegates from the Canadian and American SLPs. A group of five met in Toronto with the Canadians in late January 1979. The meeting became a one-sided debate in which Sanderson, the champion of orthodox DeLeonism, was outclassed by Karp and Robert Massi, Karp's lieutenant in New York. Again Karp had won; the Canadian SLP did not endorse Sanderson's positions at its 1979 convention. But the price of victory was high. The largest section, Toronto, evaporated, the monthly *Socialist Press Bulletin* of the Canadian SLP ceased publication, and the party there became largely inactive. Sanderson and the majority of former Section Toronto joined the New York Tendency and others to form the De Leonist Society.

The Socialist Workers Party Intervenes

One of the more curious consequences of the internal stresses in the party began early in 1977. The Socialist Workers Party (SWP), largest of the Trotskyist denominations suddenly showed an interest in the SLP, some of its leaders making overtures of friendship to Karp and visiting him in Palo Alto. The basis for this interest in the SLP was a "convergence" in views between the two parties which they



1974 views
of capitalist
campaign
funding
and con-
servation.

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claimed to see resulting from the SLP's new ventures into issue-oriented activities. SWP intervention in the SLP was also carried on at the section level and involved some rather underhanded work among individual members. At the 1978 Convention the party decided to challenge the SWP's claim of a convergence in political positions. The party would ask for a public discussion to be carried out in the weekly publications of the two groups, the *Weekly People* and the *Militant*. The NEC developed a plan for discussion and drafted the letters containing the initial challenge and first points for the exchange. Then at the 1978 NEC Session Karp pulled the rug from under the whole venture, arguing that SLP theory and positions were in such disarray that they needed discussion and change before the party was ready to challenge the SWP or any other left group.

The Report of the Weekly People Staff

The specifics of Karp's reservations about the party's readiness to debate the SWP were spelled out in the *Weekly People* staff report to the 1978 NEC Session. It began with the bold assertion that the party's program had been frozen since the death of De Leon in 1914 and characterized it as dogmatic and inadequate for the party's new positions on single issues and the struggles of oppressed classes in underdeveloped countries. It also claimed that the SIU program appeared utopian to persons not familiar with DeLeonism and raised basic questions about SLP positions on revolution, the functioning of an SIU society, and the need for a transition period. Above all, it criticized the party's failure to re-examine the program in the light of social changes since 1914.

The NEC condensed the report and sent it to the sections for discussion. After about a year and a half of discussion, reports and resolutions by sections and individual members, the entire matter was laid in the lap of the NEC at its February 1980 meeting. There it became the major topic of discussion. It soon became clear that the National Office would be satisfied only with a position on the role of the party after the revolution that reversed De Leon's statement in *Socialist Reconstruction of Society* that the party must disband at the moment the working class took over the means of production. Because the NEC for the first time did not consist overwhelmingly of Karp's supporters, resistance to the proposed position was strong. The NEC never did reach a position satisfactory to the National Office (NO) on national liberation movements. The NEC's final version of its position on the role of the party in post-revolutionary society succeeded only in rendering equivocal the unequivocal position on disbanding the party expressed by De Leon.

The Industrial Union Caucus in Education

A new position allowing SLP members to become active in their unions and even to seek unpaid office in them led to a detailed proposal at the 1978 NEC Session for an industrial union caucus in the education industry. This caucus was to serve as a conduit for dispersing DeLeonist ideas among education workers. The NEC responded enthusiastically, voting a \$1000 subsidy and instructing the national office to help by identifying members and sympathizers who were employed in education or were students. Introductory materials were produced and mailed to these potential members of the caucus, and by the time of the 1979 convention enough interest had been shown to consider organizing an industrial union caucus in the industry. During a recess at the convention about thirty members and sympathizers met and formally organized the Industrial Union Caucus in Education (IUCE).

But the IUCE always labored under difficulties. For one thing it had little immediate success in attracting members from the group it had assumed would be its chief source of support: those radical and leftist veterans of the student ferment of the sixties who had become teachers. The new members, then, had to come from the SLP and its supporters and--to the dismay of some--from ex-SLP members and such non-SLP SIUists as the IWW. But the principal stumbling block was the NO staff. Their lack of enthusiasm was clear already at the 1979 Convention. One result was that the IUCE waited for a write-up in the *Weekly People* for seven months. One was finally forthcoming only because the NEC at its 1980 session explicitly instructed the NO staff to act. Then in April 1981 with no warning that it contemplated such an action, the new in-house Palo Alto NEC withdrew the party's endorsement on the basis of a report put together by a "special committee" which indicted the IUCE for various alleged faults and offenses.

Section St. Louis

By the end of the seventies the SLP's new positions and its forays into single-issue movements and capitalist unions had begun to bring in a few recruits. It didn't take some of them long to discover that behind the myth of membership control lay the real authority: the NO staff and especially National Secretary Karp. Young members of Section St. Louis, including Don Fitz, a part-time field worker for the party, began corresponding with members in Oregon and California for the purpose of preparing a proposal for the 1980 Convention to reform the party's administration. Karp managed to obtain this

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personal correspondence and immediately phoned Fitz and fired him. In the ensuing brouhaha, the NEC expelled Section St. Louis. Later in the aftermath, the party lost Section Grand Rapids (Michigan) as well as suffering further resignations and drop outs. Like the New York Tendency a couple of years earlier, the members of former Section St. Louis organized a new DeLeonist group, Workers' Democracy, and continued their socialist activity.

The SLP Joins a Coalition

Most SLP intervention in single-issue movements was planned and executed at the section level, the most important during this period being the anti-nuclear movement. The only effort planned by the national headquarters resulted in a fiasco brought on in part by the ineptness of Bills and the NO staff. The arena was the newly hatched Emergency National Council (ENC), a coalition of groups opposed to U.S. interference in Central America. The National Office staff, always haunted by what it perceived as the lost opportunities of the Vietnam era, saw this group as a promising component of a new upswing of rebellion in the eighties. The most active members of the party were involved locally, and several were members of its national board. The SLP also contributed handsomely to finance it. The NO staff coordinated the whole SLP effort, and Robert Bills, by then national secretary, and other members of the NO staff attended national ENC conferences.

But somehow the SLP's efforts didn't pan out to the satisfaction of the NO staff. For one thing the investment in money and time didn't reap the publicity for the party or opportunities to present its program. But more important, SLP influence could not prevent the ENC from espousing an out-and-out reformist program that the SLP couldn't support. A story in the June 6, 1986, *People* reported that the NEC had decided not to endorse the ENC, thus ending the party's two-year effort to intervene in a single-issue movement.

The State of the Organization

Timm's resignation as editor of the *Weekly People* and the move away from the Petersen traditionalists in New York created an opportunity to rejuvenate the party and, it was hoped, attract some young members. Indeed, this did happen to a limited extent during the mid- and later seventies. Unfortunately for the local sections, many of these young people, often academic types, were recruited for the national

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headquarters staff in Palo Alto. Michigan alone furnished seven between 1975 and 1979. Also unfortunately, their stay was often quite short, so that the need for new staff members was never satisfied.

The increase in staff was reflected by increased party publishing. For one thing, with a young editorial staff ranging at times up to five members both the appearance and the content of the paper improved dramatically. Nevertheless the improvement did not result in an increase in subscriptions, and the circulation remained essentially what it had been in 1972. The later seventies also brought a spate of new literature other than reprints of Marxist and DeLeonist classics. The top year was 1978 when the party's New York Labor News published pamphlets on the SLP's position on the Russian Revolution, the nature of Soviet society, and the role of the party after the revolution. (One pamphlet containing an exchange between the *Weekly People* and William Winpisinger, president of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) and darling of the social democrats, revealed the phoniness of his socialist pretensions. It also exposed the shallowness of his commitment to freedom of the press when, on the pretext that the cover of the pamphlet used the IAM logo, he succeeded in suppressing the pamphlet through legal action.)

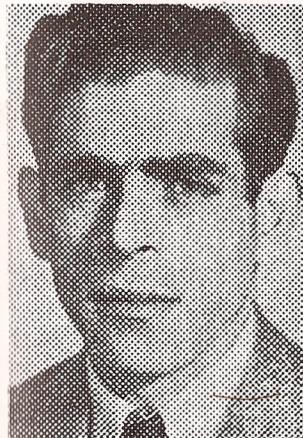
But 1978 was probably the height of what might be called the new dispensation. By that time it became clear that there would be no large influx of new recruits as a result of the party's new positions and tactics. In fact, membership continued to decline. Karp and his staff could not change the party by handing down internal democracy from the top and revamping the party's tactics. Indeed changes had been brought about by the force of Karp's own personality and the respect and fear with which he was regarded by the members. By 1980 it was clear that the new policies had failed. One by one Karp's headquarters unit began to leave. By the end of 1981 both of Karp's sons and Richard Bell had departed, as had others.

Dissension at the 1980 NEC Session made it clear that he could no longer depend on the automatic approval of his proposals by the great majority of the NEC, and significant continuing dissent there would end his dominance. The 1980 Session in February was the last held by an NEC elected from geographical regions. At the 1980 Convention a measure was adopted that would elect the NEC from sections within a 150-mile radius of the seat of the national office, Palo Alto. In practice this has resulted in an NEC consisting overwhelmingly of party employees, the members of the NO staff. A final move in the effort to centralize control in the national office made national con-

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ventions biennial instead of annual as they had been since 1976. The last one was held in April 1991.

Nathan Karp was succeeded as national secretary by his protege, Robert Bills, although he remained as a member of the in-house NEC. Because of the shrunken editorial staff it was found necessary to change the *Weekly People* to a biweekly. Renamed *The People*, it appears in an eight-page tabloid format. For the first time since 1884 the SLP did not have a weekly journal. Further evidence of the de-



Nathan Karp as 1953 candidate for mayor of New York; he is in the second of a three generation SLP family. He served as national secretary 1969-1980 but unlike his predecessor, Arnold Petersen, is a capable speaker.

cline in the party's fortunes was the decision not to run candidates in the 1980 presidential campaign. The SLP's dismal showing in 1976 prompted this decision to end what had been an SLP tradition since 1892.

The eighties have seen the SLP reverting in other ways to its pre-1973 form. For one thing it began to emphasize leaflet distribution again after relegating it to a secondary role during the seventies. But the reliance on magazine advertising to reach new contacts demonstrates the lack of personnel to carry on even this activity at anything close to the old levels. *The People* has resumed the publication of De Leon editorials and has even rehabilitated Petersen to the extent of republishing some of his articles on party history. Also the 1989 convention elected a national editor, Richard Whitney, the first since John Timm resigned in 1973. Finally, beginning with the expulsion of Section St. Louis in 1981 and most recently of Section Camden, New Jersey in 1987, the NO staff continues to exercise the same direct control that it did during the Petersen period.

Afterword

The Socialist Labor Party, born in 1876, is now 117 years old. During its first twenty-five years it was the primary spokesperson for socialism in this country. Its original three thousand members increased quickly to possibly ten thousand, but differences between Lasalleans and Marxists and then anarchists reduced its size until the 1890's when it grew considerably in size and agitational ability. However, after the formation of the Socialist Party in 1901, it steadily declined in influence. This decline would have been far more precipitous had it not been for the substantial numbers of members of eastern European and Scandinavian derivation who were recruited before immigration was drastically cut back in the 1920s. Today the SLP has about 250 members. Its fortnightly organ, *The People*, now a century old, reaches about the same number as its weekly version did in the mid-1890s, but this readership is scattered widely and no longer heavily concentrated, as it once was, in the great metropolitan cities. This has resulted in new members being recruited mostly as isolated individuals, living where there are no sections or organized activities. The SLP continues to maintain its headquarters in Palo Alto and carry on scaled down activities, financed in large part by bequests from the estates of members and sympathizers.

We are not agreed or even certain about the reasons for this decline. However, it seems clear that a major cause is its uncompromising all-or-nothing revolutionary program which also led to the decline of the STLA, IWW and WIIU. Some people are attracted to a millenial goal, religious or secular (and we plead guilty to a belief that the latter is possible), but without dealing with current problems, activity tends to be reduced to a crying in the wilderness: distributing leaflets, speaking mostly to followers and raising money to continue the process.

We believe that like revolutionary parties generally the SLP has suffered from an over-centralized organizational structure. In the case of the SLP, the structure discouraged any local initiatives or serious analysis of its "Marxist-DeLeonist" view of society. The fifty-five year tenure of Arnold Petersen did much to exacerbate the problem. He replaced the intellectual leadership of De Leon with an organizational leadership that gradually centralized authority and at the same time froze the party in a pre-World War I mode that isolated it from the unions and competing revolutionary ideas.

After Petersen stepped down as national secretary, the new administration of Nathan Karp and his National Office Staff tried briefly in the late seventies to open up the party to new strategies and viewpoints. But by then it was too late. The members were too old and too few to work within unions and issue-oriented movements and, after decades of uncritically accepting a program and tactical package, too unaccustomed to working out new approaches.

Attempts over the years by dissidents within the party to effect change failed for two reasons: One was the party's authoritarian structure. The other was a lack of membership support for change. This reluctance was clearly based on the feeling that internal squabbles would endanger the existence of the party. But the dissenters, once expelled or resigned, also were unable to prosper, at least on a national level. If a revitalized revolutionary movement ever recurs, and we believe it will, it should combine the SLP's call for social ownership and control of the economy and abolition of the state with a democratic, decentralized program for organizing production and communities. It certainly will not succeed unless it steps beyond the hierarchical patterns of the modern state.

It is conventional when writing of organizations such as the Socialist Party or militant union movements of the past to speak of their legacies in terms of reform legislation and advances in workers' standards of living. The SLP has no such legacy nor would it care to have one. Since De Leon's time, it has seen its role only as agent of revolutionary change, scorning reform activities as either, at best, impotent or, at worst, supportive of capitalist exploitation. Yet the message of the SLP that the workers can effect their own emancipation has been circulated to millions. Echoes--their source often unrecognized--have passed through the offspring of the SLP and other movements. SLP belief in working class self-reliance belongs to a tradition shared with other DeLeonists, anarchists, wobblies, council communists and others who have rejected social democratic and Leninist programs of state control.

Appendices are often the primary visual record of historical research. In addition to documents originating from the party's internal publications, they also include historical records of the party's external activities. These may include reports of international delegations, or records of the party's participation in national and international conferences. Appendices may also include records of the party's internal organization, such as minutes of national and state conventions, or records of the party's internal committees, such as the Executive Committee or the National Committee on Education and Culture.

Appendices

A: Sources and Selected Bibliography

Researchers will find the primary sources of information about Socialist Labor Party history in its archives and publications. In Appendix B we list the party's national English language organs. Many are available on microfilm, including the current biweekly *The People* which in recent years has published several articles of historical interest by Robert Bills. The State Historical Society of Wisconsin (SHSW) maintains the party's archives. (For this and succeeding references, see below). While not complete, they are very extensive and begin with the early history of the party. Under an agreement with the SLP, documents less than fifty-five years old are not normally accessible to the researcher. Speeches by Daniel De Leon and some of the later proceedings of SLP national conventions are available from New York Labor News (NYLN), the party's literature agency. Also very valuable for the researcher are the party's National Executive Committee proceedings. These are internal documents, but many of them are available from the SHSW on microfilm.

Works dealing extensively with SLP history are listed below, under Commons, Hillquit, Kuhn and Johnson. There is also a published symposium (see "Schwab, et al"), published a few years after De Leon's death. Commons and Hillquit are standard works; Hillquit was a major ideological opponent of De Leon, and his work has some inaccuracies. Kuhn and Johnson, and the symposium, published by NYLN, are very useful but completely uncritical. Fine is recommended.

For chapter 1, see Foner on the history of the Workingmen's Party of the United States, and Burbank regarding the role of the Workingmen's Party of the United States in the St. Louis 1877 general strike.

The two newest and best biographies of Daniel De Leon, which also deal with the period covered by chapters 2 and 3, are by Seretan and Coleman. Five important speeches by De Leon are published by New York Labor News. Kraditor covers the De Leon period, discussing and comparing the attitudes and beliefs of SLP, Socialist Party and Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) members.

The relationship between the SLP and the IWW is dealt with by Brissenden and Nomura (which deal with the SLP objectively) and by Duboff. Reeve and Reeve treats extensively of James Connolly's activities in the party.

Beginning with chapter 4 (after De Leon's death), there is not much non-partisan material except for some dissertations. The survey by Girard seems to be the only historical account published after 1930. There is information available about various party disputes from the point of view of the dissenters. Some of this can be found at the Tamiment Collection. An account of the 1967-70 split in the SLP is by Perry.

Chapters 6 and 7 depend heavily upon the personal experiences of the authors. We have notes and some recordings of interviews with past and present members. We also have discussed party history with the last three national secretaries, numerous NEC members, organizers and candidates. This, of course, was primarily before the book was projected and neither our memories nor objectivity are beyond question.

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Addresses of Libraries and Publishers

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New York Labor News, 914 Industrial Ave, Palo Alto, CA 94303.
The literature agency of the Socialist Labor Party.

State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 816 State Street, Madison, WI 53706. The 1907 acquisition of SLP records has been microfilmed. See F. Gerald Ham, ed., *Records of the Socialist Labor Party of America*, published by the society in 1970. Additional acquisitions occurred after Arnold Petersen's resignation as National Secretary in 1969. These have not been organized.

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B: National Periodicals in English and German

When the Workingmen's Party of the United States was organized in July 1876, it inherited *The Socialist* from the Social Democratic Workingmen's Party of North America (SDWPNA). The name was changed next month to the *Labor Standard*. (This and all other periodicals mentioned here were weekly unless otherwise noted.) Its editor was J.P. McDonnell. McDonnell left the WPUS at the December 1877 convention when the party's name was changed to the Socialistic Labor Party and the *Labor Standard* went with him.

The *Arbeiterstimme* (Workers' Voice) of New York also came from the SDWPNA. (It had been the *Sozial Demokrat*, started in 1874). In July 1878, it ceased publication for financial reasons. A multitude of local papers in the German language made it difficult to support the party's organ.

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The third organ with which the WPUS started was the Chicago *Vorbote* (Harbinger). The December 1877 convention removed *Vorbote* from the list of party organs, it having supported the position of the trade unionist faction. It apparently made peace with the party for a time because in May 1878 it is again in a position to be removed from the list for sympathizing with the Lehr und Wehr Verein supporters. It went on to become the Chicago organ of the anarchists, edited by August Spies.

Another paper called *The Socialist* was begun in Detroit in January 1878 where it was edited by Judson Grennell until that summer when it was transferred to Chicago. It expired August 1878 from lack of funds.

The *National Socialist* was started in Cincinnati May 1878, edited by John McIntosh. Around September 1878, the paper moved to Chicago where it was edited by Frank Hirth. In January 1879 it became the *Chicago Socialist*. Hirth resigned as editor June 1879 and the paper expired September 1879 for lack of funds.

A monthly, the *Bulletin of the Social Labor Movement*, began October 1879 in Cincinnati, edited by Philip Van Patten. Each issue was published half in English and half in German, the same articles appearing in both languages. It moved to Detroit February 1880. According to Commons, it appeared under the name *Labor Review* from March to June 1880. Some time prior to 1883, it moved to New York, and in March 1883, Van Patten mysteriously disappeared. It lasted until at least September 1883 and presumably was replaced in 1884 by new English and German organs. Unlike most of the other periodicals mentioned here, there seems to be little trace of its existence.

The first series of the *Workmen's Advocate* began September 1883 in New Haven, Connecticut. The second series began October 1885 and does not give the editor's name. The famous arm and hammer logo apparently first appears here on the paper's masthead. Initially the *Advocate* was a journal of both the SLP and the New Haven (CT) Trades Council, later becoming the official SLP organ in English. The 1887 national convention voted to move the paper to New York. J.F. Busche was editor until September 1889, and in October Lucien Sanial became the editor.

Der Sozialist began in 1885 in New York. When deposed in 1889, W.L. Rosenberg was the editor. After September 1889, it was edited by Hugo Vogt. It was discontinued in 1892 being replaced by *Vorwaerts*.

The People began April 1891 in New York replacing the *Workmen's Advocate* with Lucien Sanial editor. Daniel De Leon became editor in 1892. With the launching of the *Daily People* in July 1900, the name of *The People* was changed to the *Weekly People*. De Leon died May 1914 and was replaced by Edmund Seidel. With Seidel's expulsion, Olive M. Johnson replaced him in May 1918. She resigned as editor February 1938 and was replaced temporarily by Emil Teichert. Eric Hass became the regular elected editor October 1938, continuing until he in turn resigned in May 1968. John Timm was elected as his replacement. When Timm resigned in May 1973, no new editor was chosen, the editorial work being handled by a committee. In September 1974, the *Weekly People* moved to the new party headquarters in Palo Alto, California. It became a biweekly in December 1979, and returned to the old name, *The People*. Richard Whitney became the latest editor in May 1989.

Vorwaerts (Forward), New York, edited by Hugo Vogt, replaced *Der Sozialist* in 1892. It ceased to be a party organ in the 1899 split.

The *Daily People* began July 1900 in New York, edited by Daniel De Leon. It expired January 1914 from a lack of funds.

The *Monthly People* began October 1902 and lasted for "slightly over a year." It presumably was published in New York and edited by Daniel De Leon.

When the 1899 split came, the SLP lost its German press and the German language ceased to be a major medium for agitation. The party's German papers after that time are treated in the following appendix.

C: SLP Agitation in Foreign Languages

For the early SLP English was a foreign language. The bulk of the party's membership was German speaking, and in the seventies and eighties the publication of an English journal presented a real problem. During those two decades and on through the nineties, language groups of party members would float publications with no need to seek permission from the national office. The records before the turn of the century show journals in French, Dutch/Flemish, Italian, Polish, Bohemian (Czech), Scandinavian, and Yiddish, besides numerous German periodicals.

The earliest non-German/non-English paper was the Bohemian

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Delicke Listy (The Workers' Papers), founded in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1875 before the birth of the SLP. It lasted until 1883. Another Czech paper, *Pravda* (Truth), founded in 1898 in New York, lasted only a year or so and expired before the 1900 convention. Answering an inquiry from Solon De Leon in 1913, National Secretary Paul Augustine wrote that *Robotnik* (The Worker), a Slovak paper, had been published "a few years earlier" by Slovak members of the party in New York City but was discontinued. Augustine's next sentence helps to explain the attitude of the party toward such papers at that time: "The property (name and mailing list and mailing privilege) was never vested in the N.E.C. and consequently it never went on the list [in *The People*] under the head of S.L.P. organs." In 1920-22 *Proletar* (The Proletarian) "the official Czechoslovak organ of the Socialist Labor Party" was published in both Czech and Slovak in Cleveland with the help of the South Slavonian federation.

By 1878 the Scandinavian sections in Chicago established *Den Nye Tid* (The New Era). It and the Chicago Scandinavians sympathized with the trade unionist faction of the party opposing the political strategies of Van Patten and the NEC. It disappeared in the eighties, perhaps a victim of the split that separated Parsons and others from the party. In 1894, the Scandinavians began publishing *Arbetaren* (The Worker), which continued until shortly after the 1928 convention when the federation disbanded.

The first Yiddish paper actually affiliated to the SLP was *Die Zukunft* (The Future) founded by the Jewish sections of the party in 1891. Two years later the weekly *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Workers' Paper) was added to the list of SLP papers at the request of the "Convention of Jewish Socialists." This was followed in 1894 by the daily *Abendblatt* (Evening Sheet) which the 1896 convention proceedings report as having a circulation of 15,000.

Socialist newspapers rose and fell as economic conditions and the internal stresses in the socialist movement dictated. By 1897 the dissatisfaction of the Jewish sections with the direction taken by the SLP led to a split which ended *Die Zukunft*. (It was resurrected after the turn of the century as an SP-oriented paper.) *Abendblatt* continued as a daily, and another weekly, *Die Neue Zeit* (The New Times), was launched in 1897 by SLP loyalists. It lasted one year. A local Yiddish paper, *Der Emeth* (Truth), was published by the Jewish section in Boston for about a year and a half in 1895-6. A weekly magazine, *Der Arbeiter* (The Worker), edited by Joseph Schlossberg, was founded in 1904 by the Socialist Labor Club of New York's Ninth Congressional District to support SLP candidates. It lasted

until 1911. A second *Die Neue Zeit* was founded in 1914 by the much-diminished Jewish Federation. It was published irregularly and disappeared in 1918 when what remained of the Jewish Federation was suspended.

At the time of the 1893 convention Polish members of the party were publishing a paper, *Swiatlo* (Light). Although it had had to be discontinued, the efforts of a Polish organizer led Kuhn to report hopefully to the 1896 convention on the possibility of a new Polish journal. In 1913 Local 26 of the Detroit IWW published a short-lived paper, *Potege Robotnika* (Workers' Power).

An Italian newspaper, *Avanti* (Forward), was also published for a time between 1893 and 1896. In 1898 another Italian paper, *Il Proletario* (The Proletarian), became affiliated with the party. The arrangement lasted until 1902 when it became the autonomous publication of an Italian Socialist Federation, where SP and SLP members coexisted. The paper later became affiliated with the IWW and lasted under various organizations until 1946. In 1911 the national secretary reported on *Ragione Nuova* (New Reason), "the Italian organ of the party and our property, though not the organ of a federation." It was published by an Italian socialist club in Providence, Rhode Island.

The first successful newspaper by Hungarian socialists was *Amerikai Nepszava* (People's Voice in America), published in Cleveland, Ohio. It lasted from 1895 to 1898. In 1903 Hungarian workers in a fraternal union began publishing *Nepakarat* (People's Will) in New York City. It attempted to appeal to both SP and SLP members and sympathizers, but by 1904 the SLPers had captured it. In 1910, when they wanted to affiliate as a language federation in the SLP, there was enough disagreement to cause the SLP to dissolve its relations to *Nepakarat* and to launch a new weekly *A Munkas* (The Worker). The federation was disbanded in 1956, but *A Munkas* continued to be published by the party's Hungarian Committee until 1961.

A Dutch weekly, *De Volks-Tribun* (The People's Tribune), published in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1896, expired in the year of its birth. Equally short-lived was *Le Bourdon* (The Great Bell), a French journal published in 1898 in Jeanette, Pennsylvania.

Proletareets (The Proletarian) was established in Boston in 1902 as the newspaper of a Lettish (Latvian) socialist group. In 1909 when SLP members and sympathizers in the group succeeded in bringing it into the party as a language federation, they brought *Proletareets* with

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them. The paper lasted until 1917 when U.S. entry into World War I created problems for the paper and the Russian Revolution created political difficulties that resulted in the withdrawal of the Federation from the SLP.

In 1907 Yugoslav socialists first established *Radnicka Borba* (Workers' Struggle) as the publication of a socialist society that was neutral in the conflict between the SP and SLP. In 1911, though, the SLP sympathizers succeeded in steering the society into the SLP as a language federation where it continued until the federation disbanded in 1970. The South Slavonian Socialist Labor Federation was also instrumental in the publication of a Slovenian paper, *Socialistena Zarja* (Socialist Dawn), from 1919 to 1923.

Rabotnicheska Prosveta (Labor Education), the weekly organ of the Bulgarian Socialist Labor Federation, published in Granite City, Illinois, also began as the newspaper of a neutral socialist group. In 1911, this group also became a language federation of the SLP. The last issue was published in June, 1969.

Mexican members of Section El Paso (Texas) published *El Proletario* (The Proletarian) for a few months in 1911. The editor, who worked days in a foundry, was regarded as a nationalist by an English speaking member of the section, and other members had been influenced by Flores Magon's Liberal (anarchist) Party of Mexico. The paper folded in part because of the SLP's insistence that the property be signed over to the NEC.

Greek members of the SLP were never numerous enough to organize a language federation, but the Greek branches in large cities like New York, Detroit, and Chicago were able to produce a monthly *Organosis* (Organization) from 1917 to 1924. Later a Greek *Bulletin* was published on into the 1930s when the Greek branches were disbanded.

In 1916 there were enough Ukrainian members to organize formally into a federation. The federation, however, never succeeded in publishing a regular journal and was disbanded around 1918. A Ukrainian Committee of the SLP finally succeeded briefly in 1919 with *Vpered* (Forward). The committee was more successful later, the monthly newspaper, *Robitnychij Holos* (Labor's Voice), being published in Akron, Ohio, from 1921 to 1926. The committee continued to publish other SLP literature after the newspaper was discontinued.

The large number of German SLP-oriented newspapers in the last

three decades of the 1800s was reduced to zero by the split engineered by the Volkszeitung Association, which in the words of the 1900 Convention Proceedings, "robbed the party of its German organ *Vorwaerts*." The SLP then launched a new German weekly, the *Sozialistische Arbeiter Zeitung* (Socialist Worker's Paper), published in Cleveland. In 1908 it combined with the *Cleveland Volksfreund* (Cleveland Friend of the People), Section Cleveland's German paper under the name *Volksfreund und Arbeiter Zeitung*. It suspended publication in 1918, a casualty of World War I. It was never revived, the need for a German SLP organ apparently no longer existing. Some German language SLP activity continued under the aegis of the WIIU until it too ended around 1924.

Agitation in the German language resumed after World War II. In the early fifties, Theo Weder, whose Esperanto activities made him familiar with conditions in Europe, pointed out the possibilities of the SLP's influencing a movement in the German Social Democratic Party



Mastheads of the South Slavonian, Hungarian and Bulgarian organs of the longest-lived of the Socialist Labor Federations. Theodore Baeff (left), Secretary-Treasurer of the Bulgarian SLF for fifty years; Th. Weder, involved in revolutionary activity in Germany during and after WWI, was an activist in German and Esperanto agitation.

called the Association Working for Scientific Socialism, with positions rather similar to those of the SLP. As reported in the 1952 national convention proceedings, contact had been made with the group. In the subsequent decade and a half, the party's German Committee carried on considerable agitation in the German language including the publication of a German organ, *Das Bulletin*, issued approximately quarterly and the translation of several SLP pamphlets into German. The failure to organize a German DeLeonist group and, after Weder's death, the declining health of Emil Teichert, the German Committee's mainspring, brought this agitation to an end in the late sixties. A total of forty-four issues of the *Bulletin* were produced. At one point it had a circulation of three thousand.

As early as 1934 Theo Weder had written to the national office about the possibility of DeLeonist agitation within the largely European Esperanto movement. As an excellent Esperantist and a pioneer member of the radical Esperanto movement, Sennacieca Asocio Tutmonda (SAT, World Non-nationalist Association), Weder was in a position to promote DeLeonism in this medium. Beginning shortly after World War II, he and other SLP Esperantists began translating SLP articles for the SAT organ, *Sennaciulo* (One without Nationality), carrying on an enormous correspondence with interested Esperantists. The Esperanto Committee published at least one issue of a bulletin, *Sciigilo De Leonista* (DeLeonist Informer) in 1948. It eventually translated SLP pamphlets and leaflets and produced, in succession, a journal, *La SLP Folio* (The SLP Sheet), of which eleven issues were published, supplemented by at least three issues of *Respondilo Deleonista* (DeLeonist Answer Sheet). The death of Weder and the lack of concrete results also ended Esperanto activity in the late sixties.

The emphasis on the publication of newspapers in these languages derives from the fact that they are the fruits of language activity most likely to have been recorded. Actually, SLP pamphlets and leaflets were published in nearly all the languages mentioned above. The longer lasting federations, for instance, translated and published nearly every pamphlet of the Party. The Hungarians succeeded in translating and publishing the entire twenty-one volumes of Eugene Sue's *Mysteries of the People*, which Daniel and Solon De Leon had translated from French into English. Long after any organized activity had ceased in El Paso, the party translated SLP pamphlets and especially party statements into Spanish. Individual enthusiasts would translate and publish De Leon's works in their own language with NEC approval. Two of De Leon's speeches were translated into Rumanian under these circumstances.

D: THE SLP ABROAD

De Leon's promotion to the editorship of *The People* in 1892 coincided with the developing controversy within the parties of the Second International created by Eduard Bernstein's revisionist theory of evolutionary socialism. The growth of reformist sentiment began to produce divisions within many national socialist parties. The "possibilists," saw socialism arising gradually as the result of political and economic gains through the efforts of a parliamentary socialist political party. The "impossibilists," of whom the De Leon and the SLP became a contingent, saw the new society emerging only as the result of a sudden and quick revolution that would overthrow capitalism and establish the socialist commonwealth.

In the U.S. this division took an unusual form. Debs and his followers created a reformist movement and then a party, the Social Democratic Party, that served to attract the SLP opponents of De Leon's socialist unionism and anti-reformism during the latter half of the nineties. As a result, when the SLP's major split occurred in 1899, De Leon and the impossibilists were able to carry the day and retain the party's organization and press. A daily paper with a forceful editor and the machinery of the original party conferred a prominence on the SLP among revolutionary socialists in the English speaking world.

Canada

In Canada the SLP very early created a revolutionary alternative to populist and reformist imports from the U.S. The party's 1896 convention proceedings mention four sections--Toronto, Montreal, London, and Rat Portage--which had recently formed a national executive committee and launched a Socialist Labor Party of Canada. The necessarily close relations of two parties that, in effect, shared a party press and literature extended Arnold Petersen's domination of the U.S. SLP to Canada. The Canadian party reflected the attitudes and thinking of the American SLP. In 1936 the Canadians reported sixty-one members and five sections. When Canada became involved in World War II, the Canadian SLP began publishing a monthly journal, the *Socialist Press*. The *Weekly People* and publications of the New York Labor News remained the source of Canadian agitational literature, however. Later with declining fortunes the *Socialist Press* became the mimeographed *Socialist Press Bulletin* and was distributed free to contacts.

The withdrawal from the U.S. party of the New York Tendency in

1978 produced a sympathetic reaction in Canada. By 1979 the Canadian party had split, and there remained only a few scattered members.

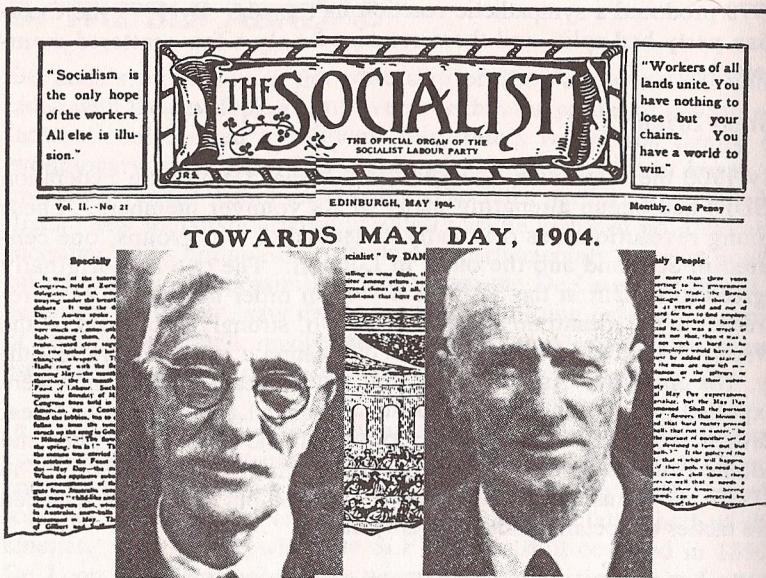
Great Britain

By 1900 the reformism of Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation (SDF) had begun alienating many of its younger members. These young revolutionaries originally consisted of two groups, one centered in Scotland and the other in London. The two had originally agreed to remain in the SDF for a year in order to pick up more recruits. In the meantime the Scottish group, strongly influenced by the *Weekly People* and De Leon, began publishing a revolutionary monthly, *The Socialist*. As a result of their intransigent conduct they were expelled in 1903 and organized the Socialist Labour Party of Great Britain soon after. The London group left the SDF a year later and adopted the name Socialist Party of Great Britain (SPGB). (The SPGB has remained staunchly anti-reformist but has never accepted the tactics of socialist industrial unionism.)

Although the British party's Executive Committee endorsed the American party's venture into the IWW in 1905, some of the members disapproved the committee's action including such prominent figures as Leonard Cotton and Thomas Bell. Within a year, though, the opponents, some of whom had resigned from the party, were reconciled. The British SLP then embarked on an era of intense agitation on the economic field, organizing an IWW-oriented propaganda group, the Advocates of Industrial Unionism (AIU), which, like the IWW, included members of other political organizations.

Because of its role as prime mover in the AIU during this period of industrial unrest, the SLP grew rapidly in the following years. By 1911 the original five branches had increased to 27 with the bulk now in England. But as in the U.S. the revolutionary industrial unionists split in 1909 on the question of the need for political action. The syndicalists led by Tom Mann departed, and the remaining supporters of the SLP position in the AIU renamed their organization the Industrial Workers of Great Britain (IWGB).

The first major split in the party occurred in 1911. The Edinburgh and neighboring Leith branches, concerned at the centralization of authority in the national organization and reformist tendencies of some national leaders, defied the NEC and were expelled. In June 1912 these members constituted themselves the British Section International Socialist Labour Party. Continuing on into the thirties, they were not recognized by the American SLP but in later years had fraternal relations with the Industrial Union Party.



Early issue of *The Socialist* published by the British SLP. Leonard Cotton (left), national secretary and William Ironside party press manager in the British SLP (1950).

But the major consequence of the venture into radical unionism was the rapid growth of the party beginning in 1910. The activity of party members in the rise of the Shop Stewards Movement during World War I also helped raise the SLP's stock among British workers. By 1920 the British SLP numbered around 1500 members.

Its downfall came with the realignment of revolutionary socialists brought on by the Russian Revolution. The SLP had embraced the Bolshevik Revolution wholeheartedly, the Socialist Labour Press in Glasgow becoming the primary source of Lenin's and Trotsky's writings in Great Britain. When the question arose of uniting the British revolutionary socialists into a communist party, the SLP split, many of the most prominent members joining the new CP.

The rest of the SLP continued as a DeLeonist group, gradually fading during the twenties, reviving briefly in the thirties and again subsiding after World War II. One problem of the post-1920s was the American SLP's involvement in British affairs, a situation made possible by its ability to determine who should have the literature franchise, and by Arnold Petersen's friendship with Leonard Cotton, who had maintained a hold on the British party's machinery comparable to that of Petersen's on the American. After the death of Cotton, there was a final flowering in the late sixties complete with the rebirth

of *The Socialist*. But this came to a halt with the resignation of the young members who had begun it. The U.S. SLP's disagreement with the way the British SLP handled the incident ended relations between the two parties in 1970. Today there is no organized SLP in Great Britain.

Australia

In the NEC's report to the 1960 national convention, Arnold Petersen wrote of the history of DeLeonism in Australia stretching back "sixty or more years." A 1921 letter to Arnold Petersen from the Australian party carries a letterhead announcing that it is the oldest socialist party in Australia, "founded in 1837." But it actually seems to have been founded as the Australian Socialist League (ASL). The name of its newspaper, *The Socialist*, was changed to *The People* in 1900, and the ASL changed its name to the Socialist Labor Party in 1907.

The party was headquartered in Sydney where it also maintained a publishing house, the Australian Labor News Company. By 1919 much of the activity of the Australian party was directed into the economic movement. The WIIU was also active and published a monthly for a time. The SLP's national secretary was E.E. Judd, who apparently had a level of testiness that equalled or surpassed that of Petersen and a similarly long tenure. During the twenties they clashed, and for years correspondence was minimal.

Around 1940 contact resurred, this time with a different national secretary, H. Green. It was a shrunken SLP consisting of two branches: Melbourne and Adelaide. Reference in the report to the 1940 national convention also mentions a "bogus" SLP in Sydney. During the war an organized SLP disappeared entirely. It was reborn around 1950 when Monica Prince, the daughter of a former member, revived it in Sydney where activity was resumed as well as contact with the American party. Publication of *The People* was also resumed. The group of young members that carried on this activity persisted until the mid-seventies, when activity again died down.

South Africa

The South African SLP was first organized in 1902 by Jock Campbell and others. It apparently was short-lived, for in 1910, I. Israelstein wrote to then national secretary Paul Augustine informing him that a Socialist Labour Party had been organized in South Africa and asking him to have the information published in the *Daily* and *Weekly Peoples*. There was also an Industrial Workers Union, which maintained

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contact with the Detroit IWW. By 1913, though, the South African SLP had fallen on dark days. A January 1913 letter from the national secretary, K.W. Fraser, to members informed them of that fact and invited them to a meeting to consider how to liquidate their debt to the New York Labor News and the British Socialist Labour Press.

In 1916 the secretary of the International Socialist League (ISL), D. Ivon Jones, wrote to the American SLP asking for the SLP constitution, platform, etc. The ISL was a new organization and included several former members of the South African SLP whom he named. Petersen must not have had further contact with the ISL because in January 1921 he wrote asking for information, having been told that the ISL was the South African organization most like the SLP. The reply told him that most SLP members had joined the ISL, which differed from the SLP in having endorsed the Third International's Twenty-One Points and received the blessing from Moscow. Smilansky and Goerke, SLP observers at the Third Congress of the Communist International in June 1921, mentioned being introduced to a delegate from South Africa who was "a former SLP member, now a communist." The ISL presumably became a component in the South African Communist Party.

Miscellaneous

As a movement that flourished among immigrants, one might expect a reverse flow of DeLeonist socialism back to the old countries from time to time. Actually it almost never happened except in individual cases. The single instance of a DeLeonist group being so organized is mentioned in the 1928 report of the South Slavonian Socialist Labor Federation (SSSLF). A member, Kosta Kostich, had returned to Yugoslavia and organized a branch there. The secretary asks in his report, "What to do with this new branch?" Apparently it disappeared; it isn't mentioned in later reports.

The SSSLF also carried on correspondence with, and sold literature to, two DeLeonist groups of Yugoslav immigrants in South America, one in Buenos Aires, Argentina and the other in Montevideo, Uruguay. The groups sold literature, distributed *Radnicka Borba*, the SSSLF weekly, and contributed to federation funds. They also carried on agitation among Spanish-speaking workers using the limited literature the SLP had in that language. The relationship continued as late as 1972 after the federation had disbanded. Reports invariably speak of the harsh economic and political conditions under which they existed.

E: National Secretaries of the SLP

The term "national secretary" was not used in the party until 1889. Holders of the equivalent office were elected by the National Executive Committee and referred to as secretaries of the NEC or corresponding secretaries, although Philip Van Patten was referred to as "National Corresponding Secretary" in the 1877 convention proceedings. At the 1879 convention, the corresponding and financial secretaries were united under the title of "Party Secretary," to which office Van Patten was elected, this time by the convention. Apparently, the 1889 Chicago convention provided for the first "National Secretary." He was to be elected by the New York City sections.

July 1876 -Apr. 1883 Philip Van Patten	Oct. 1889 -Sep. 1891 Benjamin Gretsch
Apr. 1883 -June 1883 Jacob (Jakob) Schneider*	Sep. 1891 - 1906 Henry Kuhn
June 1883 -Oct. 1883 Emil Kreis*	1906 -Jan. 1908 Frank Bohn
Oct. 1883 -Dec. 1883 Hugo Vogt*	Jan. 1908 - 1908 Henry Kuhn*
Dec. 1883 -Mar. 1884 (office abolished?)	1908 -Feb. 1914 Paul Augustine
Mar. 1884 -Aug? 1888 W.L. Rosenbeg	Feb. 1914 -Apr. 1969 Arnold Petersen
Aug? 1888 -Jun? 1889 W. Hintze (*?)	Apr. 1969 -July 1980 Nathan Karp
Jun? 1889 -Sep. 1889 W. Hintze	July 1980 - Robert Bills
Sep. 1889 -Oct. 1889 Sergius Schevisch	* = pro tem

F: Presidential Campaigns

The Socialist Labor Party entered every Presidential election between 1892 and 1976. For these years, we show the candidates, the total vote credited to them and, in parentheses, the number of states in which they appeared on the ballot. For other Presidential election years, we indicate briefly what action the party took.

1876	The party chose to focus on trade union activity until it could mount credible election campaigns.		
1880	A ticket was nominated but rejected by referendum. The Greenback Labor candidates were supported.		
1884	A decline in party resources and perhaps the relative success of anarchist tactics by the IWPA influenced the SLP to forego election activity.		
1888	A slate of Presidential electors was placed on the New York state ballot dedicated to the abolition of the Presidency. It received 2068 votes.		

1892	Simon Wing	Charles H. Matchett	21,173 (5)
1896	Charles H. Matchett	Matthew Maguire	36,367 (20)
1900	Joseph F. Malloney	Valentine Remmel	33,382 (22)
1904	Charles H. Corregan	William W. Cox	33,510 (19)
1908	Morrie R. Preston (replaced by August Gilhaus)	Donald L. Munro	14,029 (15)
1912	Arthur E. Reimer	August Gilhaus	29,213 (20)
1916	Arthur E. Reimer	Caleb Harrison	14,670 (17)
1920	William W. Cox	August Gilhaus	30,513 (14)
1924	Frank T. Johns	Verne L. Reynolds	33,883 (19)
1928	Frank T. Johns (replaced by Verne L. Reynolds)	Jeremiah D. Crowley	21,590 (21)
1932	Verne L. Reynolds	John W. Aiken	34,038 (19)
1936	John W. Aiken	Emil F. Teichert	12,788 (18)
1940	John W. Aiken	Aaron M. Orange	14,883 (14)
1944	Edward A. Teichert	Arla A. Albaugh	45,336 (15)
1948	Edward A. Teichert	Stephen Emery	29,272 (22)
1952	Eric Hass	Stephen Emery	30,426 (23)
1956	Eric Hass	Georgia Cozzini	44,547 (14)

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1960	Eric Hass	Georgia Cozzini	47,647	(15)
1964	Eric Hass	Henning A. Blomen	45,319	(16)
1968	Henning A. Blomen	George S. Taylor	52,588	(13)
1972	Louis Fisher	Genevieve Gunderson	53,831	(12)
1976	Jules Levin	Constance Blomen	9,616	(10)
1980-1988	The party declined to nominate candidates feeling that electoral restrictions and limited resources did not justify participation.			

G: SLP National Conventions

We have adopted the numbering convention of the SLP which begins with the Newark convention. Foreign language federation conventions are not included.

Unity Congress	Germania Hall, Philadelphia, PA	July 19-22, 1876			
1 Newark, NJ	Dec.	1877	5 Cincinnati, OH	Oct.	1885
2 Allegheny City, PA	Dec.	1879	6 Buffalo, NY	Sep.	1887
3 New York, NY	Dec.	1881	7 Chicago, IL	Oct.	1889
4 Baltimore, MD	Dec.	1883	8 Chicago, IL	July	1893

(The 9th to 27th national conventions were held in New York, NY)

9 July 1896	14 Apr.-May 1916	19 Apr. 1936	24 May	1956
10 June 1900	15 May 1920	20 Apr. 1940	25 May	1960
11 July 1904	16 May 1924	21 Apr.-May 1944	26 May	1964
12 July 1908	17 May 1928	22 May 1948	27 May	1968
13 Apr. 1912	18 Apr.-May 1932	23 May 1952		
28 Detroit, MI	Apr. 1972	35 Milwaukee, WI	Aug.	1982
29 Southfield, MI	Feb. 1976	36 Akron, OH	July	1983
30 Chicago, IL	May-June 1977	37 Akron, OH	July	1984
31 Philadelphia, PA	May 1978	38 Akron, OH	July	1987
32 Milwaukee, WI	July 1979	39 Santa Clara, CA	Apr.-May	1989
33 Milwaukee, WI	June-July 1980	40 Santa Clara, CA	Apr.	1991
34 Milwaukee, WI	July 1981	41 Santa Clara, CA	May	1993

H: Addresses of the SLP and Derivative Organizations

(Date) indicates when organization was originally formed.

Socialist Labor Party (1876)

914 Industrial Ave.
Palo Alto, CA 94303
Robert Bills, National Secretary

De Leonist Society (1978?)

P.O. Box 22055
San Francisco, CA 94122
Jean Steiner, Corresponding Secretary

Industrial Union Party (1927)

P.O. Box 1858
New York, NY 10159
Sam Brandon, General Secretary

Society for Economic Equality (1983)

P.O. Box 1564
Grand Rapids, MI 49501
Frank Girard, Contact Person

Philadelphia Solidarity (1969)

422 W. Upsilon St.
Philadelphia, PA 19119
Ben Perry, Contact Person

Committee for Socialist Union (1987)

P.O. Box 20010 Greeley Square Station
New York, NY 10001
Bernardo Doganiero, Corresp. Secretary

New Union Party (1969)

621 W. Lake St., Suite 210
Minneapolis, MN 55408
Brian McNeill, Secretary

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